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PLATE
10

A
SKETCH
OF
OLD ENGLAND,
BY
A NEW-ENGLAND MAN.

"Republicanism, as it exists beyond the Atlantic, in all the glories of bundling, gouging, negro-driving, and dram-drinking; such poems as the Columbiad; such speeches as Mr. Adams makes at convivial meetings; and young ladies, who, when asked to dance, reply, "I guess I have no occasion." **QUARTERLY REVIEW.**

"Often while waiting at table, and listening to their disgusting opinions, I have been called forward by one of the guests, and struck in the face severely, for some trivial mistake I had committed in serving him with food. In South Carolina, the guests do not hesitate to chastise their entertainers' servants whenever they feel disposed; and a party of white people there, often make cursing and beating their slaves in attendance, their chief employment during dinner." **BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.**

"Any American will gratify a stranger by giving an account of himself; and if the truth is unfavourable to him, he will invent falsehoods; rather than not play the egotist." "The Americans are more detestable than any other people under the influence of ardent spirits. Liquor only serves to draw forth their natural coarseness, insolence, and rankness of feelings." **HOWISON'S TRAVELS.**

- "These scourgers and murderers of slaves." **EDINBURGH REVIEW.**

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A
SKETCH
OF
OLD ENGLAND.

LETTER XXI.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

IN running the parallel between our government and that of England, the House of Lords having been, most unaptly, as I think, compared to the Senate of the United States, it may be neither uninteresting, nor without amusement, to inquire into the respective points of their resemblance.

To begin with the first that naturally presents itself. The Senate of the United States is an elective body, the members of which are chosen for six years. The House of Lords is composed of members who sit there for life, and their eldest sons after them, by the right of hereditary succession. The members of our Senate are all equal; there is neither distinction of rank, nor precedence, nor seniority, but what is freely awarded to merit or talents. In the House of Lords there is, on the contrary, an endless diversity of rank and

pretension, which must obviously tend to destroy, or at least diminish, the feeling of equality, even where a man is said to be among his peers. In fact, it is this nice and almost imperceptible gradation of ranks, the strictness with which it is every where enforced, and the submission every where paid to it, that constitutes, in my opinion, the cement of every monarchical government. It is not without reason then, that etiquette is considered of so much importance here, since it is an essential part of the system; and as grave a matter of state, as you tell me they are endeavouring to make it at Washington, where it cannot but appear, as it really is, utterly ridiculous and out of place.

Indulge me, dear brother, in speculating a little deeply and fully upon this matter. Deference to merit and high station will always be voluntarily paid in a sufficient degree by all mankind, unless it be a few of those worthless vagabonds who are exceptions to every general rule. This deference being freely paid by freemen, from the honest impulse of warm and generous feelings, is worthy of the giver and the receiver. When I meet a man I respect and admire, and offer him the precedence in entering a room, or at the table, or any where else, freely and voluntarily, I am ennobled by the courtesy. But it is a different thing when I am *obliged* to do this. Then I become the inferior, if I submit to it, and then the first seeds of slavery are planted in the consciousness or the acknowledgment of inferiority. . Whenever, therefore, a system takes root in any country, founded upon the absolute right of one man to walk before another, or enter a room, or do any other immaterial thing before his neighbour, the people are already half enslaved by their habits, if not by their principles.

This system of gradation in the ladder of life

is here brought to great perfection, and its parts adjusted with the nicest exactness. "A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn," and a king is ten times as wise as a minister, judging by the vast distance between them, in the eye of etiquette. Thus a duke precedes a marquis, in entering a room, going to dinner, or marching in procession. Besides this, his mantle has "*four guards*," and his coronet has only leaves, without pearls! But even dukes have their degrees; and a duke of yesterday is entitled to turn his back upon one of to-day, on all occasions of etiquette.

A marquis, although "*most noble*," carries the badges of inferiority in his mantle of only "*three doublings and a half*," and his coronet of pearls and strawberry leaves, all of a height. An earl is only right honourable; his mantle has only three doublings, and his coronet has the pearls raised upon points, with the leaves low between. A viscount, although right honourable too, has only two doublings and a half to his mantle, and his coronet is only "*pearled with a row of pearls close to the chaplet*." A baron is right honourable as well as the viscount; but his inferiority is demonstrated by a mantle with only two doublings, and a coronet with only six pearls.

But this is not all. A duke may have in all places, except in presence of the king, a cloth of state hanging down within *half a yard* of the ground. His duchess may also wear a similar robe, and have her train borne by a baroness—if she can get one to do it. Mark, brother—no earl is allowed to wash with a duke without the duke's permission. A marquis may have a cloth of state reaching within a *yard* of the ground, in all places, except in presence of a king or a duke. His wife is entitled to have her train borne by a knight's lady, out of the presence of her superiors, and in

their presence, by a mere gentlewoman. An earl may also have a cloth of state, but only fringed, and without pendants ; and his countess may have her train borne by an esquire's wife, out of the presence of her superiors only. A viscount has no cloth of state, but is allowed to have a *cover of essay* held under his cup when he drinks, and his lady is only entitled to have her train borne by a *woman*, out of the presence of her superiors. A baron may have the cover of his cup held under it while he drinks, and a baroness may only have her train borne by a *man*, in the presence of a viscountess. All these give place to each other in the order I have mentioned them, except entitled by some office to a precedency connected with the possession. Persons of the same grade of rank are again arranged according to the date of their titles, which again creates another distinction, of the utmost importance in the eyes of the possessor.

You will perceive, by this detail, how the spirit of personal independence and the noble self-consciousness, which alone give dignity to man, must be repressed by these outward and palpable insignia of inferiority, which derive an importance from habit and custom. Servility to superiors, and supercilious airs of superiority towards inferiors, together with a miserable subserviency to those who can bestow on them the privilege of a cloth of state, or of turning their backs upon those who before turned their backs upon them, must naturally result from such a system of nicely graduated importance. No one, that ever mixes in titled society, can fail to perceive the relative importance accorded to these different ranks, and, more especially, the airs of superiority assumed by a lady of the old nobility over an upstart titled dame of yesterday. In fact, the lord or the lady

who marches first of their grade at a coronation, has all the superiority over those that march at the other end, that the leader of a herd of buffaloes has over the rest of the rabble in the rear. So sensible were they, at an early period, of the operation of this degrading sense of inferiority in the House of Lords, that it became the practice, and so continues, in all trials of peers, for the youngest peer to vote first, and so on, in regular gradation, up to the highest officers of state in the house.

But the privileges of carrying a cloth of state, marching first in a procession, and having their trains borne by barons', knights', or esquires' ladies, are not the only ones enjoyed by the nobility. They possess certain rights and exemptions, which, it will be perceived, give them a decided advantage over other subjects of this realm. Their persons are at all times privileged from arrests, except for contempt of the king, felony, breach of the peace, or treason. No *capias* can be sued out against them for trespass or debt; nor can *essoins* lie against a peer of the realm. In civil causes, they are not to be impanneled upon juries; and in case a peer be returned upon a jury, there is a special writ for his discharge. They cannot be bound over to keep the peace, any further than pledging their honour for that purpose. Contrary to the custom of the lower house of parliament, they can constitute a proxy to vote for them during their absence. This privilege of voting by proxy proves what a farce must be the custom of debating a question in the House of Lords, where it is thus customary for one-third, sometimes one-half, of the peers to decide upon the greatest questions, without hearing the arguments on either side. A peer is not subject to outlawry in any civil action, nor can any attachment lie against him. In

ROY W. B.
2187
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his sacrifice of principle, becomes of no value to the purchaser; but here, a peer can receive the wages of corruption, and, at the same time, enjoy the privilege of betraying the right of his countrymen over and over again to the end of his life.

From what I have said, you will perceive, that the king of England holds the House of Peers in a state of dependence by three threads, each of them strong enough to bind a modern Sampson of patriotism. It is at any time in his power to sink a peer into comparative insignificance by a single frown—secondly, it is always in his power to make an earl a marquis, and a marquis a duke, whereby each will have an additional doubling to his mantle, and enjoy the invaluable privilege of walking before those whom he formerly walked behind—thirdly, he has the sole disposition of the public money, and the public offices, and, as I said before, can buy a peer without losing his voice as an hereditary legislator.

And yet, would you believe it, my dear brother, there is still some of the old 1688 spirit left among these peers, notwithstanding they are surrounded by temptations. Some thirty or forty, who have no places, vote occasionally against the ministry, and, on the late question of the Queen, almost one half the House of Peers divided on her side, which, a wag observed, was a proof of their being under petticoat government. Nay, what is the greatest political wonder of the age, two bishops voted against the ministry! No marvel the church is considered in danger here.

LETTER XXII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

You may form some notion of the resemblance, in point of substantial reality, between the House of Commons here, and our House of Representatives, which, in running the parallel between the two systems of government, have been compared to each other, by the fact, that fifteen thousand voters return a majority in the former body. There is one nobleman who sends twelve members, and there are Birmingham and Manchester, containing between them upwards of two hundred thousand inhabitants, that send none. Counties, containing from one to three or four hundred thousand inhabitants, have no more weight in the House of Commons, than a borough in which there are some half a dozen voters, who return two members. Nay, the members from the rotten boroughs are actually of more consequence in the house, from being notoriously articles of sale, and at the command of the highest bidder; whereas, those from the counties, being sometimes men of independence and principle, are listened to quietly and indifferently, and suffered to take their own way, from a conviction that there is no use in tampering with them.

The representatives of the boroughs, on the contrary, are either, for the most part, the proprietors of the boroughs themselves, their sons, brothers, &c. or they are mere creatures of the proprietor; or they are persons who can afford to bribe high, because they mean to be bribed high in turn; or lastly, they are persons of political talents, who can get into parliament only through the patronage of some borough-holder, who is either a partisan of the minister, and wishes to furnish him an able supporter, or who expects to make himself of consequence by setting his great mastiff to bark at him. The opportunity thus afforded, of getting men of talents into the House, who would otherwise perhaps not attain to a seat, has been made one great ground of defence to the borough-system. To me, however, it seems but one among the million of objections, that may be urged against the system of representation, or rather *misrepresentation* practised here. Experience has every where demonstrated, that in the freest assemblies, as well as the freest states, there has been the greatest display of eloquence in the legislators; and what is still more important, it has also demonstrated, that honesty and independence in a legislator are of much more consequence than mere brilliancy of talent. One has hardly need to ask, what kind of honesty or independence is to be expected from a man of talents, the very tenure of whose situation is that of dependence? It seems to me, brother, that it is one of the crying evils of this borough-system, that it is calculated to prostitute the independence of talent, and tempt genius to the sacrifice of its best principles.

The giving of members of parliament to deserted boroughs, and withholding them from great cities, demonstrate, in the clearest manner, the to-

tal practical dissimilarity between that body and our house of representatives, in every thing but the powers which they exercise. It proves that there is, in fact, no actual representation of the people of England in parliament. There is nothing approaching to, or resembling an equality in the exercise of the right of suffrage; there is nothing which approaches to an apportionment of the number of representatives to the number of freeholders; there is nothing, in short, in the system, adapted to those changes which time and circumstance produce in every nation, and according to which its government ought to be modified. Boroughs without trade or importance, and almost without inhabitants, return members to parliament, because they possessed all these some centuries ago; while vast cities, which have grown up into wealth, importance, and numbers, are denied the privilege of representation, because some centuries ago they were not in existence. No government, and, least of all, any system of representation can be applicable to the situation of a people, where changes of this kind are totally disregarded.

There have been vast and learned dissertations, of late, as to the question of who voted, and who did not vote, for members of parliament in the reign of Henry the Third. The advocates of a general distribution of the right of suffrage lay great stress upon certain equivocal authorities, on which they found the doctrine of universal suffrage; as respected the freemen of England. But then, who were the freemen of England at that time? As nothing is settled here according to the enlarged principles of human rights, or in accordance with those changes which time inevitably produces in men and things, resort is always had to ancient precedents, many of them entirely inapplicable to the

present state of England, and to laws and customs questionable in their existence, or, if not questionable, no longer founded in reason or expediency. A jury of antiquaries now decide on the rights of Englishmen. Hence, it is considered of infinite importance to ascertain the fact, whether the first parliament of England was originally the delegated representative of all the freeholders of England. That this was actually the case appears, both from the very origin of that assembly, as well as from various other authorities. The peers represent themselves; but as it would be manifestly impossible for the people to sit collectively and legislate for themselves, they delegated their powers to their representatives. Hence, the common language of the early writers on the constitution is the unqualified assertion, that every Englishman is present, either by himself or his representative, in the English parliament. If this does not mean, that every English freeholder has a voice in the election of his representative, it means nothing but mockery and nonsense.

The Wittenagem t, the Saxon parliament, and the original of the English one, was unquestionably an assembly modelled on those free principles common at that time, and from the earliest ages, to the northern nations, who, according to Tacitus, were all governed by their own consent alone—*De minoribus rebus principes consultant, de majoribus omnes*. Xephiline also, speaking of the Britons, tells us, *apud hos, populus magno ex parte principatum tenet*. It is true, the feudal system, which succeeded, subverted the ancient freedom of British and Saxon institutions, yet this does not impeach the validity of the people's claim to a fair representation in parliament, especially in a country where antiquity supersedes every thing; since the freedom, spoken of by Tacitus and Xephiline,

was far more ancient than the feudal system, which was established by force and fraud upon its ruins.

One of the most barefaced frauds of construction, next to the famous fallacy of making the United Colonies of America a part of the manor of Greenwich, in England, is connected with the borough-system. The strong ground resorted to, in support of the representation from boroughs without constituents, is, that these boroughs having once exercised the right of sending representatives in time of prosperity, that right became inalienable, and being now considered a part of the value of the property, is as much a matter of purchase and sale, as any other right annexed to, or inherent in land, such as fish and game. But there are too many exceptions to this argument, of once a borough always a borough, once represented, always so, to admit of its having much force. Between sixty and seventy boroughs, some of them still places of great consequence, once sent representatives to parliament, but send none at present. Among these are the town of Manchester, and the renowned village of Greenwich; which last sent representatives in Philip and Mary's reign, but which has never had that honour since; although it was held sound logic to say, during the disputes between the colonies and Great Britain, that the former, as appendages to the manor of Greenwich, were represented in parliament, while the manor itself was without a representative. Now the fact, that so great a number of boroughs have become disfranchised in the course of time, is, I should think, quite sufficient to prove, that this inalienable right, like all other corporate rights, may be given or taken away, may be lost or acquired, in a thousand ways. Of consequence, it may be forfeited by abuse, as every other corporate right

may be forfeited ; or it may be abolished by law, when, by the course of events, it notoriously ceases to accord with its original intention.

That the representative system in England is about as bad as it can conveniently be, will appear from a few instances which I shall adduce, to prove the total absence of all due distribution of the right of suffrage, either in regard to property or population. Generally speaking, neither wealth nor numbers have any thing to do in the election of members of parliament, except that the former, being deprived of its direct influence, employs itself indirectly in bribery and corruption, in buying boroughs, or feasting electors.

Many of the boroughs are the sole property of a single person, who, when an election comes round, creates some half a dozen paupers temporary freeholders, merely for the purpose of voting him into parliament. Others are held by two proprietors, who, after trying their purses against each other, till they are half ruined, generally compromise matters by returning a member a-piece, if there be two, or, if but one, representing alternately. A third class of boroughs, having no particular master, may be said to be in the market, and generally choose what is politely termed a *patron*, that is to say, a gentleman who is willing to pay the poor rates, taxes, &c. of the borough, for the honour of representing it in parliament. This is not bribery ; O, no ! by no means—it is only a *quid pro quo*.

These boroughs, although in many instances not worth a hundred pounds a year in rents to the proprietors, are immensely valuable, since they enable the possessors to make excellent bargains with the ministry, and to provide for some half a dozen poor relations. Lord Lonsdale, who not only possesses several boroughs, but rules nearly the whole coun-

ty of Westmoreland, can have almost any thing he asks in the way of place, pension, management of school funds, charities, and other matters, which our English philanthropists know so well how to turn, not only to public but private advantage, as appears from Mr. Brougham's report. In difficult times, that is, when the ministry is tottering, a rotten borough, which returns two members, secures to the proprietor the disposal of one or two regiments, two or three snug places for his relations, and a sinecure of from one to three thousand a year for himself. At present, however, the price is considerably fallen, as members of parliament do not value their independence very highly, and the ministers are almost sure of a majority at any time, if they have twenty-four hours' warning. Still, a borough, returning two members, and yielding no other product than a dozen or two of freeholders, voting in *forma pauperis*, will sometimes sell for thirty, forty, and fifty thousand pounds. In fine, you may form some conception of the monstrous absurdity of an independent English parliament, from the fact, that the town of Buckingham, with thirteen votes, returns two members, while the whole county, which contains upwards of one hundred thousand inhabitants, is represented only by an equal number. The county of Cornwall, by means of its numerous rotten boroughs, sends forty-four members to parliament, although it contains less than fifty thousand people, while the county of York, which contains upwards of a million, only sends two. This certainly looks like inequality; but such things are forgotten when one calls to mind Old Sarum, Rye, Bramber, Milburne Port, and fifty other places, which return members that represent some dozen or twenty wretched paupers, who, though very properly denied this privilege even in our free

country, send members to parliament by dozens here.

The subject is so hacknied that I will not oppress you with any more facts. What I have adduced must satisfy you of the truth, that the representative system here is a wretched farce, if any thing can be called farcical that cheats the human race of its liberty and happiness. There is no longer a counterpoise in the English constitution, either to the prerogatives of the crown, or the corrupt influence of wealth. Even in the great counties, no man can hope to be elected, whatever may be his merits or his talents, without spending a sum sufficient to ruin an individual of independent fortune. Where the freedom of suffrage is moderately extended, the people too often show themselves utterly unworthy the possession of this noble privilege, by the corrupt manner in which they sell, or barter it away, for tavern treats. Some years ago, three noble candidates started against each other in the county of Northampton—the earls of Halifax, Spencer, and Northampton. Each of these, it must be recollected, was already an hereditary legislator ; but they were not content with this influence assigned them by the constitution. They wanted to strengthen it by sending their friends to the lower house, and accordingly entered into an election contest, that eventually sent the estates of one to the hammer ; the person of another into exile ; and *dipped* the income of the third so deeply, that it has not yet entirely recovered. Every body here remembers the great Yorkshire contest, some years since, between the sons of earl Fitzwilliam and lord Harewood. The former is, and always has been one of the most deservedly popular noblemen in this country ; but the contest, for all that, cost him upwards of one hundred thousand pounds, and, if I do not mistake, his antagonist

succeeded notwithstanding, by dint of spending more money. The election of Mr. Fox for Westminster, which is what is called an independent one, always costs his great whig friends an immense sum; and that of Sir Francis Burdett is equally expensive; so that you see, neither merit, nor talent, popularity, nor radicalism, can secure an election—it must be gained at last, indirectly, by money. While the people are thus willing to sell their rights, it is vain to talk of reform in parliament. Indeed, from what I see, I am almost inclined to think, that they make such a rout about universal suffrage here, as profligates clamour for their inheritance, only that they may throw it away in debauchery, or sell it to the highest bidder.

What is called *radicalism* here, consists principally in advocating, not exactly universal suffrage, but in giving the right of voting for members of parliament to all "resident householders," paying taxes, as they generally do, to an amount which one would think fairly entitles them to a vote for those who enact them. This, you will perceive, is little more than putting the right of voting for members of parliament on the same footing with the right of voting for a member of congress, in most of the states, at least in very many of them. The great objection to this, even with those who think parliamentary reform indispensably necessary to the security of the government, is, that it will make the house of commons a democratic body. It appears to me, that if that house is not the representative of the commons, or the people, or the democracy of England, it is worse than nothing; for it was originally, beyond doubt, essentially the democratic branch of the government. Be this as it may, the cry of radical, or democrat, will set even the most liberal of these patriots legislating against the people with all his might.

I happened to be present, not long since, when Lord John Russel made his motion for extending the right of representation in parliament, to certain of the great towns, and taking it away, or buying it, of some of the most contemptible of the boroughs. He stated various instances of corruption in the elections for boroughs, alluding to them by name, and explicitly maintained, that, in the present state of things, where, in a vast many cases, some twenty, ten, or perhaps fewer electors, "little better than paupers," were to return one or two members, it was next to impossible to prevent these beggarly voters from selling, and some rich purchaser from buying, a seat. All the acts of parliament, he said, for preventing this system of corruption, were evaded by dexterous dealers in boroughs; and the practice of selling votes was now as common as that of selling wool, or cheese, or any marketable commodity. It was in this manner, or by the influence of borough proprietors, who either represented them in person, or bargained for them with the minister, that about three hundred members were returned to the house.

Lord John called upon the Marquis of Londonderry to deny these facts, and challenged denial from any member. His lordship did not deny them, for it is not many years since a case of this kind was brought home to himself. Nobody denied them; and, in fact, it seemed as if it were a matter of too little consequence to call for denial. He might just as well have complained of a notorious strumpet for selling her favours, to the young members who were lounging about, yawning most piteously at such *stuff*, or nodding in their seats, half asleep, till roused by the noble marquis, whose profound, or rather perplexed eloquence, every now and then waked them up, and caused them to cry "hear! hear!" with vast vociferation. Af-

ter which they addressed themselves to finish their nap. Most of these attentive young gentlemen were here, simply because their fathers, or uncles, were proprietors, or patrons, *anglice*, corrupters of borough *freeholders*. Can we wonder that a parliament, so constituted, should vote with the minister on all occasions? And if we did chance to wonder, should we wonder any longer, when told that somewhere about one hundred and eighty of these worthy representatives are holders of offices, civil or military, while, probably, at least three times as many more of their relations, share in the bounty of the minister?

If you want to see a picture of the English parliament at full length, it is only necessary to look at the list of members in the royal calendar. You will there see little more than a catalogue of office-holders, and can form an idea of the importance of being brother or uncle-in-law to a lord, by the care with which the circumstance is recorded. I will give you a few instances at random.

“Macdonald—One of the Clerks of the Privy Seal, eldest son of Sir James Macdonald, and nephew to the Marquis of Sligo.”

“Lowther—Brother to the Earl of Lonsdale, and brother-in-law to the Earl of Westmoreland, a Colonel in the army.”

“Pitt—Brother-in-law to Lord Gambier, father-in-law to the Earl of Romney, and cousin to Lord Rivers.”

“Finch—Uncle to the Earl of Aylesford, a groom of the King’s Bedchamber, a Lieut. Gen. and Colonel of the 22d regiment of foot.”

“Jenkinson—*Half*-brother to the Earl of Liverpool.”

“Pringle—*Nephew-in-law* to the Earl of St. Germans.”

"Strutt—*Uncle-in-law* to the Duke of Leinster."

"Bentinck—*Next* brother to the Duke of Portland, brother-in-law to the Earl of Gosford, a Lieut. Gen. and Clerk of the Pipe."

"Sir William Scott—Elder brother of Lord Eldon, and father-in-law to the Marquis of Sligo—Judge of the High Court of Admiralty and of the Consistory Court—Vicar General to the Archbishop of Canterbury—Master of the Faculties—Chancellor of London—Official Commissary of the Diocese of Canterbury and London," &c.

There is no end to these instances, insomuch that the whole seems a list of office-holders, rather than representatives of the people. To me there appears something exceedingly mean and contemptible in thus clinging to the skirts of nobility, to give importance to a situation, the duties of which, if properly fulfilled, would place them higher than nobility itself. Such is the abject dependence of the nobility on the patronage of ministers, that I have heard of a nobleman, who died the other day, leaving five hundred pounds to a part of his family, "*till they could be provided for by the government.*" Men, women, or children, it is all one—there are places for them all, or if not, pensions, which do just as well. Some of these places are without duties altogether, and of others, the duties are such as might be performed for a tenth part of the salary. On a question in parliament, the other day, respecting the necessity of having six lay lords of the admiralty, as they are called, a gentleman assured the house, that the duties of the office were so laborious, that he was obliged to resign the situation, "*because it interfered with his private business.*" Accordingly, he exchanged it for a place in the board of control, which meets once in three or four years. These

lay lords receive a thousand pounds sterling a year, besides those pretty perquisites which appertain to every public station here, and sit in parliament to vote the very money expended through their agency. Can we wonder that parliament has lost its independence? So far from it, I can only account for the phenomenon of a dozen or two independent members, on the supposition that there are not quite places and pensions enough to satisfy them all.

It is true, there is a solemn act of parliament forbidding any man, who accepts a place from the king, occupying a seat in the house, with certain exceptions. These exceptions comprehend some of the ministers, who are precisely the persons most likely to interfere with the freedom of the assembly. Then, there is another capital flaw in this important law for preserving parliamentary purity. A man may be re-elected to his place in the house, with his office and all, immediately after resigning his seat. Thus the whole is in fact a mere farce, for the house is full of office-holders. Military and naval officers, whose situations make them directly dependent on the king for employment and official emolument, abound, and, with a few exceptions, vote for his majesty with even greater zeal than they would fight for him. It is said, in justification of this, that by these means parliament can avail themselves of the talents of professional men at all times. But there are other simple and obvious ways of coming at this professional experience, without giving these officers a voice in the adoption of measures, with which their prospect of employment, promotion, and fortune, is directly and intimately connected. These members vote on the army and navy estimates, the employment of ships and troops, the appropriations for ordnance, fortifications, and what not. Is it to be wondered

at, that these appropriations continue to increase, while scores of those who are to share the spoils, have a voice in the granting of them? In short, my brother, any body, that sees the constituents that go to the formation of this mighty mass of corruption, must be perfectly satisfied, that it is utterly impossible St. Stephen's Chapel should be any thing but a mere broker's shop, for disposing of the people's money, and the people's rights, to the best profit.

But it may be said, that the constitution of the House of Commons is not materially changed since the period when it was considered, and that most justly, the guardian and protector of the people of England. This opens a curious subject of inquiry into the progressive steps by which this illustrious body has been stripped of its ancient purity, and become a naked prostitute. What has become of the *country interest*, the backbone of the nation, and the great bulwark of the nation's liberties? Where is that body of men, the like of which was not to be found in any nation of Europe—the men, who with the education, feeling, spirit, and fortune of nobility, belonged to the people, and were identified with all their interests? Some of them are swallowed up in the vortex of the funds; others are swallowed up in the vortex of taxes. Vast numbers of them have become deeply interested in the funds, where they have invested their property *to keep it out of the way of taxation*. They have gone over from the land to the paper interest, and will vote taxation, because they are more deeply interested in the payment of the dividends on the public debt, than in the payment of taxes on the land. They receive more than they pay. The middling class of freeholders, a race of people found in none of the governments of Europe, and peculiar to England, who, before

they were swallowed up by taxation, were the conservators of the rights of Englishmen, the barrier between the high and low—these are gone; they have vanished, or are metamorphosed into miserable dependants on ministerial patronage. The small remnant are either frightened at the cry of “radicals” into the support of every arbitrary measure, or waste their time in unavailing efforts to stem the influence of rotten boroughs and ministerial corruption. The greater the revenue of a government, the poorer are the people; and the poorer the people, the more easily are they corrupted. The more they pay, the worse they are governed, because their representatives may be bribed with the money taken from their pockets, to betray their dearest rights.

It was long ago predicted, that a corrupt parliament would one day enslave England. The time is at hand, or has already arrived. Nobody that sees the distresses of the people, the pertinacity with which immense majorities refuse every motion for a reduction of the taxes which have brought them to this state, and justify every stretch of arbitrary power, can doubt, that a majority can be brought to sanction any measure of tyranny proposed by the minister. The innovations on the freedom of Englishmen, that brought Charles to the block, and drove James into exile, are nothing to the late atrocities committed by a government which has become essentially military, and sanctioned by parliament with a majority that renders redress entirely hopeless. Blood has been shed in the streets of cities, and in the open fields, *in defiance of the laws of England*; women married to Englishmen, and children, young children, born of English parents, have been rode over, trampled upon, wounded, maimed, murdered, by armed soldiers, at the word, not of a civil magis-

trate, but a military commander. The king of England has justified the outrage with his own hand, and the parliament of England has not the spirit to remonstrate or to interfere in this atrocious business. Nay, such is the utter contempt in which the rights and the lives of citizens are treated, that a subscription is now on foot for rewarding the military murderers of a citizen of London. I do not hesitate to say, that from all I have seen and heard, since my residence here, *reform is hopeless*. The government is afraid to yield a little, while the people will not be content with less than all. So long as so large a proportion continue in a state of distress, they will never cease to demand the reduction of the taxes, which are, in a considerable portion, absolutely essential to the payment of the interest of the public debt. A national bankruptcy must follow the inability to pay this interest, and the bursting of a bubble of eight hundred millions will uproot the system of government to its foundation. The two parties can never meet in their ideas of reform, and, if they did, the effects would not answer the expectations of either. The mere exclusion of a parcel of rotten borough representatives, and the admission of those of a few of the larger towns, will answer no end, so long as the illimitable means of corruption are left in the hands of the ministers. On the other hand, such is the number of wretched and discontented people here, that to accord to them the right of suffrage indiscriminately, would most undoubtedly occasion a complete revolution. Reform is, I think, quite out of the question; and the struggle is, in sober reality, of a nature that must, unless heaven interpose with miracles, either produce a rigid and inflexible military domination, or a revolution far different from that of 1688. This is the alternative which the friends

of human liberty, and the advocates of human power, must look steadily in the face. It is a pity, that the tenacity of power will not permit rulers to yield a little to change of circumstances, and to the progress of the human mind; thus easily and imperceptibly accommodating themselves to those omnipotent changes, which no human power can resist effectually. A feather, or a bauble of the diadem, resigned in season, will often save the head that wears it from the block. But I may perhaps resume this subject in a future letter.

You will perceive, from the foregoing details, that there is nothing more than a mere outside resemblance, between the House of Commons here, and the House of Representatives at home. The latter really represents the people of the United States; the former represents the mere paper money and patronage of the government. A large proportion of the members of parliament only represent a few paupers, whose votes they have purchased, and the numbers of these representatives actually counterbalance, and outvote, the representatives of the merchants, manufacturers, and agriculturalists, combined. The price of a borough, which returns two members, is enhanced sometimes four, six, ten, twenty fold, by that privilege—can we wonder, then, if the purchaser is anxious to make the most of such an expensive bauble? So, when a man buys the votes of a borough at a high price, is it not to be expected he will sell his own to the highest bidder? The whole system is fraught with corruption. It leads men into temptation precisely where there is the greatest danger of falling, and where a fall is accompanied with the most extensive evils.

You, my dear brother, are a *****;
it is therefore your province to watch over the
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welfare of the people. Oppose every species of prodigality in the government, by withholding the means; and resist every attempt to establish a court etiquette, that places one man above, or before another, by right rather than courtesy. The deference paid to age, to merit, talents, services, or high station, when freely paid, as it always will be by those whose deportment is of any consequence to one's feelings, honours the giver and the receiver. But the moment one man precedes another by the mere authority of an arbitrary rule of etiquette, that moment he becomes his superior, and the way is prepared for a permanent distinction of ranks. The satellites of courts know this; and that is the reason they are so tenacious respecting points, which people of little experience, and less reflection, think themselves wise in merely laughing at as ridiculous.

LETTER XXIII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

IN the days of the Gregories, Innocents, and Bonifaces, of the church of Rome, when a sentence of excommunication was equivalent to the loss of a crown, and kings officiated at the stirrups of a pope, the civil and military government of England was, in a great measure, subordinate to the ecclesiastical. But from the time that Henry

the Eighth declared himself the head of the church, and became the great fountain of ecclesiastical honours and profits, the case has been quite reversed; and among no class or profession has there been ever since so much loyalty and submission, as has been displayed by the dignitaries of the church of England. There have been no *Beckets* since; and the greatest champions of the divine right of kings have always been found among the chosen shepherds of the king's people. This was to be expected; since the same dependence on the Pope, which formerly produced an abject submission to his will, when transferred to the king would naturally produce precisely the same effects. Accordingly, the only opposition to the will of the king ever made by the hierarchy of England, since the reformation, originated either in a jealousy of its own peculiar prerogatives, or of Popery and Presbyterianism, or some other species of nonconformity.

The reformation of the church was, beyond doubt, however, highly favourable to the interests of civil liberty in England, because it swept away, or shook to their foundations, a vast many abuses, the production of ages, and which would not have been got rid of, except by the powerful agency of religious enthusiasm. Still, however, though it devested the church of some of its most important prerogatives, it probably never would have been brought about, had not there been left sufficient temptation, in the new order of things, to secure the adhesion of most of the protestant leaders. Beyond all doubt, if great ecclesiastical privileges, as well as revenues, had not been still left to the church, the reformation would have been delayed for ages. I believe it would have been impossible, to have gone at once from the papal hierarchy to presbyterianism, or to any other than a national church establishment of some kind, founded on ex-

clusive privileges and great emoluments. The step, from a catholic to a protestant national church, was going as far as the nature of things, and the progress of free principles, would at that time admit.

Yet if we examine into the matter closely, I imagine it will appear, that the essence of this change consists in substituting, for a foreign spiritual head, a native temporal one, both governing, or professing to govern, by divine right. The papal dignitaries depended upon the pope, as the successor of St. Peter; the protestant dignitaries depend upon the king, who is king by divine right. In the former case, they laboured to maintain the prerogatives of the pope; in the latter, they are equally zealous for those of the king—this is all the temporal difference. The present church of England establishment, though it exercise a vast sway by means of its wealth and prerogative, can be clearly traced, through all its gradations of ranks, into almost a complete dependence on the king of England, as its head.

The king, having the appointment of all archbishops, bishops, and beneficed clergy, belonging to the established church, it is of little consequence, with regard to the inferior dignitaries, who either enjoy their livings by appointment of the bishops, or through the gift of various nobility, gentry, and high officers, who are patrons. There are other livings in the gift of colleges, &c.; but there is in the system of this government such a regular chain of dependence of all the privileged orders upon the king, that he may, and in fact does, by inferior instruments, direct, or control, or influence, the appointments of nearly all the clergy of the church of England. So long as a bishop can look to translation from a poor see to a rich one, or from a rich see to a richer, and that exclusively by the fa-

vour of the crown, it is hardly to be expected, that he will exercise *his* patronage over the inferior clergy in any manner offensive to the king. So with respect to the nobility, who, with few exceptions, either by themselves or their connexions, are more or less creatures of the king's bounty, and can at his pleasure be entitled to another fold to their mantles, or to walk before when they before walked behind. Nobody here, who sees the importance of such distinctions, can possibly suppose these people would do any thing lightly, that might put them out of the way of such singular benefits. Thus, whatever power the church possesses, or whatever influence it may employ, is, in fact, but the power and influence of the king, exercised by his deputies and dependants. That this delegated authority is very extensive, will appear from a short summary of some of the most important features of the ecclesiastical government.

It is affirmed by Giraldus Cambrensis, that the Archbishop of Canterbury was formerly primate of Ireland as well as England, and that he was called *Alterius orbis Papa, et Orbis Britannici Pontifex*. Moreover, it is held, that he was anciently so highly respected abroad, at all great councils, that he was placed before all other archbishops, at the *Pope's right foot*. I wonder what the archbishop elector of Mentz, or he of Cologne, would say to this flourish of Giraldus? Formerly he was accounted the second person of the kingdom, notwithstanding the old claim of my lord mayor; but now he only comes next to the members of the royal family. He is styled, in jest I suppose, by the king, who appoints him by his sole will and pleasure, *Dei gratia Archiepiscopus Cant.* and writes himself *Divina Providentia*, while the bishops are only *Divina permissione*.

At coronations, he not only places the crown on the king's head, but is entitled to the privilege of falling down on his knees, and doing homage, even before the first prince of the blood! He has the power to grant licenses, and dispensations, in all cases formerly appertaining to the court of Rome, *always saving the king's prerogative*; that is to say, to dispense, at his own pleasure and that of the king, with almost all the regulations for the prevention of abuses in the church. He can allow a person to hold a plurality of benefices; dispense with irregularities; take off the guilt of *simony*; allow of *non-residency* in pastors; constitute public notaries; give away in each diocese of the bishops one dignity, or living, otherwise in the gift of the bishop, taking his choice, whenever a new bishop is installed. He is entitled to call and preside over provincial synods; to consecrate all bishops; to appoint guardians to all the spiritualities of vacant bishoprics: thus holding by deputy all the episcopal rights and ecclesiastical jurisdictions appertaining to that see. Finally, he has the privilege of qualifying eight chaplains, which are two more than are permitted to a duke. The power of dispensing with certain canons of the church, which forbid persons labouring under certain deformities and imperfections of body, from entering into holy orders, is another important prerogative. You may judge how far this may be carried, when I tell you, that Archbishop Laud refused to ordain Shirley, the dramatic poet, because he had an ugly mole on his cheek.

But among the most substantial powers exercised by him, is that of holding certain courts of judicature for deciding differences in ecclesiastical affairs, from which, however, there is an appeal to the court of delegates in chancery. First, there is the Court of Arches, over which a dean

of the Arches presides, and where all causes are decided without the intervention of a jury. All the officers of this court are appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Secondly, the Prerogative Court, which has cognizance of wills, and estates of persons dying intestate. All the offices of this court are likewise in the gift of the primate. Thirdly, the Courts of Peculiars, amounting to fifty or sixty in the several diocesses, and denominated by that name, because they belong peculiarly to the Archbishop, and are altogether independent of the bishops, although within their spiritual and temporal jurisdiction. Fourthly, the Court of Audience, where the Archbishop himself presides, for the purpose of hearing causes turning on disputes concerning elections; consecrations of bishops, inductions to benefices, and dispensing with the banns of matrimony. The Archbishop of York has pretty much the same prerogatives within his province, which is, however, by no means so extensive as the other.

The bishops of England, although, as you will perceive by a close attention to the preceding summary, in many particulars subject to the metropolitan, are still possessed of most important privileges, that place them naturally among the most loyal of the king's subjects. They are barons and peers of the realm, by writ, patent, and feudality. They take precedence of all temporal barons below viscounts, and are members of the House of Lords not only as barons, but bishops. They preside by themselves in their own courts, and pass sentence without consulting with any body, as all writs run in the name of the bishop, and not in that of the king, as in the other courts. They can also depute their authority to another person, as a bishop suffragan, or chancellor, or commissary; and thus, as is now very generally

the case, entirely, or in a great measure, neglect the highest of their duties, that of being the shepherd of their flocks, not only in shearing time, but in times of distress of soul and body. They enjoy freedom from arrest, outlawry, and distress of goods, at all times; and they are protected from the inquest of society, as well as all popular censures for their neglect of duty or disregard of clerical decorum, by the statute of *Scandalum Magnatum*, which prescribes a severe penalty for criticising a bishop. Besides these general privileges, almost every bishop of England possesses some others of various kinds; that are peculiar to his see, and which contribute either to his power, dignity, or emolument. These last amount to from two to forty or fifty thousand pounds. Who, after reading all this, will believe in the *Nolo Episcopari*?

Under the bishops are deans, archdeacons, and prebendaries, some of whom have their courts too; rural deans, and parish priests or rectors, and curates, all of whom, except the last, are entitled to various privileges, and are either dependent on bishops, nobles, colleges, lord chancellors, chief justices, &c. &c. for their good livings. Of these it may truly be said, that those who are least paid do the most work. A poor curate of thirty, nay, twenty pounds a year, will preach two parishes asleep every Sunday, while the bishop, the dean, the archdeacon, and the prebendary, seldom preach at all, except at some anniversary of a public charity, a consecration, or before the king.

The causes of all this neglect of spiritual duty are, first, a dependence on the king, the nobility, the bishops, or the patrons, for their dignities; and, secondly, the right they claim and enjoy, in perpetuity, of a tenth of the produce of the lands of England, free from all secular service, taxations,

and impositions whatever. This right has been attempted to be derived from the practice of the primitive churches, but for this there is no direct authority. It therefore mainly rests upon a charter preserved by one Ingulphus, a monk, reciting a donation of Ethelwolphus, sole monarch of the Saxons, dated in the year eight hundred and fifty-five. The monarch first assumes, that all the lands of England belong to himself; and that being thus the sole proprietor of the kingdom, he, by the advice of his nobles, makes this magnificent donation of one-tenth to the clergy. The charter concludes with stating, that he who shall add any thing to this grant, the Almighty shall prolong his days; but whoever shall presume to diminish it, let him be assured that he shall account for it to the tribunal of Christ. This charter was confirmed by Edmund, Edgar, Ethelred, Alfred, and William the Conqueror; and the clergy now maintain, that they have a better title to their tenths, than one half of the landholders can show for the possession of their lands.

But to me it appears, that the first grant is founded upon the assumption of a falsehood, which vitiates every successive confirmation. No king of England certainly ever possessed, or was entitled to give away, all the lands of England. No king, that we read of, before, or since this Ethelwolphus, possessed a right to dispose of any, except his own peculiar domains, or those estates that had accrued to him by forfeiture, or lack of heirs. It is absurd in principle, and false in fact, that the whole nation ever did, or ever could, be subjected to a forfeiture of their lands to the king. Ethelwolphus therefore gave away what was not his own; and those of his successors, who wished to obtain the support of the clergy, either against the Danes, or to maintain a questionable or dis-

puted title to the crown, only confirmed a donation which the original donor had no right to make, and the others no authority to sanction. Neither Edmund, Edgar, Ethelred, Alfred, nor William, was proprietor of English soil, and therefore they could not give authority to an act which was originally founded upon a false assumption of proprietorship. Be this as it may, however, the clergy enjoy their tenths of the produce of English lands and English labour, and preach to the people as often as they like, whether the people like their doctrines or not. There is no *proof* that this charter of Ethelwolphus was ever obeyed; and the necessity of such frequent renewals by different kings, seems a pretty good ground for concluding that it was not considered binding upon the people.

That this charter is a forgery of the monks, is not improbable. It would not be the only instance of the kind. The decretals of Isidore, under the authority of which succeeding Popes attempted to stretch their powers, by establishing the right of appeal from the metropolitans to the Roman See, and the ancient prerogatives of the synods infringed upon most materially, were afterwards demonstrated to be forgeries by the most undeniable testimony. There are many other instances of monkish forgeries, besides this famous one of Isidore. Setting aside the monstrous legends of their saints, which no man in his senses believes at this time, it is on record, that wills were often forged by the monks and ecclesiastics, for the purpose of defrauding heirs of their rights, and converting their property to the use of the church. It is also now acknowledged by the best antiquaries, that the charters by which the monasteries pleaded exemption from episcopal jurisdiction in England, before William the Conqueror, were all forgeries. Indeed, the clergy and monks, by their

exclusive knowledge of Latin, the language in which all these instruments were couched, had it in their power to commit every species of forgery, and would, most probably, have obtained possession, in this manner, of all the lands of the kingdom, had they not occasionally been stripped by force, of what they had acquired by fraud. These instances are sufficiently numerous to justify a suspicion of the authenticity of this notable bequest of what was not his own, by the Saxon monarch. The forgery of the decretals was discovered by the clergy, whose rights were invaded by succeeding Popes, under their pretended authority, and whose learning enabled them to detect the imposition. But where the people could not read their own language, much less the Latin, in which this charter is written, and where the monks and clergy were interested rather to support, than to invalidate, its authority, there was no one to expose the fraud, even had it been ever so palpable. Setting aside, however, the reasons for doubting the authority of this charter, we may except to the testimony of Ingulphus, on the score of a general want of historical accuracy. He, among other things, ascribes to king Alfred the division of England into counties, hundreds, and tithings. Now, there is nothing of this in the laws of Alfred; and it is known to every legal antiquary, that these divisions of counties, &c. existed in England long before Alfred's time, as they are mentioned in the laws of Ina. Ingulphus, therefore, is not good authority for a fact so important, as this liberal donation of king Ethelwolp. However this may be, these tithes form another and a very important link in the chain, which holds the church here in dependence upon the state. It is very well understood, that if the voice of a vast majority of the people were heard and attended

to, they would soon be relieved from one of the most vexatious of all their burthens. Without the support of the king and the aristocracy, therefore, the clergy of the church of England would, in a little time, be put on a footing with those of our own country.

The church here is suspended by yet another link, which is almost equally effectual in binding the clergy to loyalty. I mean the privilege possessed by the king and his sons, of almost unlimited qualification of chaplains, and by that of the nobility and bishops of qualifying a stated number, by which, on receiving a dispensation from the Metropolitan, they are exempted from the law, which forbids the holding of more than one benefice with cure of souls. By this right of qualifying chaplains, a vast number of clergymen are exempted from the operation of the law, and enabled to centre in their own persons a good number of fat livings. This is another special reason, why the clergy are more industrious in forming connections, rendering political services, and courting the nobility and ministers of state, than in performing their duties to their religion and their God. It is not by attending their flocks, administering to their souls, and performing their duties as faithful pastors, but by servility to the king, or electioneering services to the minister, or supporting the divine right of majesty, that they expect to rise in the church. When I first came to this country, and saw in the royal calendar, that the king had some twenty or thirty chaplains—the prince regent upwards of a hundred—the dukes of York, Clarence, Kent, Sussex, and Cumberland, from twelve to thirty each, and that none of all the nobility were content with a single one, I concluded that this was the most pious king, prince regent, royal family, and nobility in all Christendom. But now that I

know the secret, and that this is only one of the innumerable modes, by which almost all the laws for restraining the monopoly of privileged orders are evaded, or rendered inefficient, I do not think quite so highly of the devotion of these elevated personages. I see in all this parade of religion only another branch of that vast stream of patronage, which meanders through this whole system of government, with the volume and devious windings of our mighty Mississippi, and is fed by as many tributaries, explored and unexplored, as that father of rivers.

Besides their spiritual privileges, the clergy here are eligible to civil offices. Indeed, so far as I know, there is nothing in the laws or the constitution of England to prevent a bishop from being an admiral or field-marshal. The most common civil office the clergy, however, exercise, is that of a justice of the peace, and the number of these reverend magistrates is really prodigious. You will find the rector of the parish and the justice of the peace in the same person all over this country. This is a rare union of spiritual and temporal functions. As a divine, it is his duty to forgive; as a magistrate, to punish. If a delinquent confess his crime, and ask for consolation, it is the duty of the parson to administer it, while the justice is bound to commit him on his own confession. The parson promises mercy, but the magistrate must inflict justice—the one promises pardon for sin, the other punishes transgression. The man who fears the law will close his door against all communion with the magisterial parson, who, for aught he knows, comes as a magistrate to detect his crime, and drag him to punishment. It appears to me, that the two professions are incompatible, and that no man can possibly reconcile their opposite duties. It was but the other day, that the reverend doctor Owen

sat as a magistrate on the examination of a man and his wife, named Barrett, suspected of being accomplices in a murder at Highgate. Should they be condemned to death, it will be the doctor's duty to attend them in prison, to offer them consolation, to promise them pardon, if they repent, and finally, to officiate as magistrate in seeing them punished in this world for a crime, for which he has promised them forgiveness in the next. But this eligibility to temporal offices, is another link in the chain of clerical dependence, and, as such, is *noli me tangere*.

The consequences of this system of nicely graduated dependence, which is interwoven with the very vitals of the church, are sufficiently manifest in its entire subserviency to the king. So thoroughly is this relied upon, that the oath of allegiance is not tendered to the clergy of the church of England, as their loyalty is amply secured by the ties I have just recited. Even in some instances, where pensioners and placemen of the House of Lords have been awakened to a sense of their duty to their country, we find the bishops, with one or two rare exceptions, true to the spirit of their order. So too, among the reverend orthodox writers of the church of England, there is but one of the present time, that is not to be found among the champions of the divine right of kings, the advocates of antiquated abuses, the clerical knights errant, who go about in the armour of the church, taking away the good name of all those who labour for the freedom and happiness of mankind. By them the advocates of religious toleration are confounded with the enemies of religion, and by them resistance to the tyranny of kings is made synonymous with rebellion against God himself.

I have been more particular in developing these subjects, from a desire to satisfy your mind, that, as

there is nothing in the system of government, now in operation here, at all analogous to our constitution, we cannot expect to derive any benefit from the old habit, of looking to the present practice of this country for examples.

LETTER XXIV.

London.

DEAR BROTHNIE,

The preparations for the king's coronation, and the consequent marshalling of the household troops, together with the various claims to services of one kind or other on the occasion, naturally turned my attention to the subject, and caused me to compare the state of his majesty with that of our worthy president.

In making some little researches into these matters, it is inconceivable what a nest of officials I have routed out of his majesty's chambers, wardrobe, cellars, kitchen, scullery, stables, and dog-kennels. All these are more or less privileged persons; most of them paid for doing nothing, and all living at the expense of the people. To me it was really amusing to see the uncouth names of some of these offices, and the pitiful functions of others, that are filled by some of the highest nobility of the kingdom. It is in these, as well as in more impor-

tant particulars, that the radical, essential, and irreconcilable difference between this people and government, and ours, is clearly indicated. Our people would laugh ready to split their sides, or if they did not laugh, they would groan in spirit, to see these men, to whom they had been accustomed to look up with reverence or respect, deriving dignity, importance, and wealth, from the performance of the most menial offices, such as the lowest white man among them would not deign to perform for the highest. Indeed, the whole arrangement of the court here would be irresistibly ridiculous, were the farce not turned into a tragedy, by the additional burthens and privations the people are obliged to sustain to support this mummery. As our good people are, however, happily exempt from such degrading burthens, they are free to make themselves merry on the occasion. I will assist you as far as I can by entering into the details.

The first of these important personages is the Lord High Steward of the king's household, formerly the great master of the king's household, whose province it is to superintend the state of his majesty's chambers, kitchens, &c. and to whom all officers and servants of the king's house, except those of the chapel, chambers, and stable are subject. His dignity, state, and honour are said to be exceedingly great, for he attends bare-headed upon the king, and swears the members of parliament. His salary and emoluments are probably two hundred times greater than those of the High Steward of the President of the United States, whose functions are pretty similar, except that he does not administer the oath to members of congress, and is not, I believe, called lord.

The second great officer of the household troops is the Lord Chamberlain, who, it is to be remembered, is different from the Lord *Great* Chamber-

lain of England. To the former belongs the superintendence of all the officers of the king's chamber, except the precincts of the king's bed-chamber, which territory belongs to another great man, called the Groom of the Stole. All above stairs, to the very garret, is subject to his control. He is also overseer of the wardrobes, beds, tents, revels, music, comedians, hunting, messengers, trumpeters, drummers, artisans, handicraftsmen, physicians, apothecaries, surgeons, barbers, and chaplains. In this capacity of Master of the Revels and Comedians, it is that he exercises the prerogative of licensing plays. The present Lord Chamberlain is said to be a capital judge of Pantomime. The Lord *Great* Chamberlain, is still greater than he, being entitled to livery and lodging at court, besides other mighty privileges. On the day of the coronation, before the king rises from bed, the Lord Great Chamberlain is privileged to bring him his shirt, coif, and wearing apparel, for which he is entitled to all the king's night clothes, and the bed and bed-clothes, as a fee. Then he carries the coif, gloves, and linen, at the coronation; the sword, the scabbard, the royal robe and crown, with privilege to undress and attire the king. For these great services he receives forty ells of crimson velvet for a robe. Lastly, he serves the king on that day, before and after dinner, with water to wash his hands, and has the basin and towel for his pains. Only to see the vast difference between a king, "by the grace of God," and a President, by the will of the people! The persons, whose functions approach nearest to these mighty lords, in the President's establishment, are, or at least were, when I was last at Washington, two clever black fellows, named Pompey and Paul, if I recollect right, whose services did not cost the nation a farthing.

Our worthy President, it is true, is respected and beloved by all the people ; wherever he goes he is received with acclamations, and he was never shot at in his whole life, except by the enemies of his country in battle. But for all this, there is not a freeman of a white colour, and in decent circumstances, born and bred in our country, that would not feel himself degraded by the performance of such menial services. These offices are at present filled in England by a marquis and a baroness, the latter by hereditary descent, who, I hope, for the sake of decency, did not insist on her claim of undressing the king at the coronation.

After the Great Chamberlain cometh the Master of the Horses, *Comes Stabuli*. This great officer, as he is called, hath now the ordering and superintendence of the king's stables, horses, footmen, grooms, farriers, coachmen, smiths, saddlers, &c. Besides all this, he, and he only,—think of that, brother!—has the privilege of making use of any horses, pages, or footmen, belonging to the king's stables. Another of his great privileges, is that of riding next behind the king, leading the king's horse of state. The person at present exercising these high functions is a duke, the descendant of the greatest of the Grahams of Scotland. The President's coachman is the person most nearly resembling the Master of the Horse, and receives, I suppose, about fifteen or twenty dollars a month for his services.

Under one or other of these three mighty officers, all, or nearly all, the subordinate ones are marshalled, and an army of them there are, I assure you, numerous as the drones of the hive, and, like them, for the most part, living by the labours of others. There be "land rats and water rats;" Treasurers of the Household; Comptrollers; Confederers; Masters of the Household; Clerks of Green

Cloth ; Clerks Comptrollers ; Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber ; Gentlemen Pensioners ; Gentlemen Cup-bearers ; Gentlemen Carvers ; Gentlemen Sewers ; Gentlemen Ushers ; Gentlemen Grooms of the Bedchamber ; "all honourable men," I assure you ; and, what is of more consequence, all well paid by the people.

Next come the Pages of the Presence Chamber ; Grooms of the Great Chamber ; Pages of the Bedchamber and Backstairs ; Officers of the removing Wardrobe ; standing Wardrobe keepers ; Laundresses of the Body Linen ; Sergeants at Arms ; Messengers of the Great Chamber ; Clerks of the Checque to the Messengers in Ordinary ; all of them, too, "honourable men," or women, and most of them having deputies, who have their deputies, &c. &c. *ad infinitum*. In the rear of these, march "four and twenty fiddlers all in a row," under the command of the Grand Master of the Music. Next come the Sergeant Trumpeters ; Court Drummers ; Masters of the King's Tennis Court ; locksmiths ; card-makers ; embroiderers ; cabinet-makers ; operators of the teeth ; oar-makers ; harpsichord-makers ; sergeant skimmers ; distillers ; pinmakers ; perfumers ; strewers of herbs ; apothecaries ; rat-killers ; mole-catchers ; necessary women ; and yeomen of the mouth—all very honourable persons, that serve the king, and are well paid by the people.

I have not done yet. I must not forget the Master Cooks, those important personages—nor the people of his majesty's bakehouse, pantry, buttery, cellar, spicery, confectionary, ewry ; the scourers, turnbroachers, doorkeepers, soil carriers, of the king's privy kitchen, the queen's privy kitchen, the household kitchen, larder, scalding house, pastry, scullery, and woodyard ; nor the harbingers, the porters of the gate, the bread-

bearers, wine porters, table deckers, purveyors, and pankeepers ; not one of whom would ever forgive me for not making honourable mention of themselves, and their dignities, as servants of the king. A vast number of these offices are of the most frivolous kind, as you may well believe, from the nature of the functions exercised by their betters.

Here too, as in every other department of the government, we see the same care taken to instil and preserve a sense of dependence and inferiority, distinct from every moral, mental, or physical qualification, and derived from the king's pleasure alone. One grade of officers of the court is not allowed to approach nearer to the king's person than a certain room, beyond which a superior order of beings, gifted with superior privileges, inhabit or officiate. In short, from those who are permitted to perform menial offices about the king's person, to those who only come within the outskirts of the court, there is a regular gradation of inferiority. The great man, who hands the king his shirt, looks down upon the little man, who is only admitted into the king's presence ; while the great man, who is allowed to come inside of a certain door, considers the little man, that waits on the other side, vastly and radically his inferior. The divinity of a courtier is the king ; and whoever can get nearest to him, partakes, in exactly the like proportion, of the divine nature of majesty.

It is for this reason that courts have, in all ages, been the theatres for the excitement and struggles of all those petty passions, which disgrace our nature. Perpetually reminded, as courtiers are, of their inferiority to those above them in station and favour, by a thousand causes of mortification, arising from the system of exclusions I have mentioned, jealousy, envy, and spleen, are eternally excited, and at work. Every one is consequently

striving to get within a certain door, from which he is excluded by etiquette; and the passions, which in the wide world are only occasionally awakened to violence, are here kept in a continual heat by an everlasting succession of mortification. The will of the king alone can raise them above such things, and to the king they sacrifice all independence of mind, rather than be kept in the ante-room, while others wait in the king's own chamber!

All this, they tell me here, is absolutely necessary to the dignity of the king, and the security of his throne; because, without this abject sense of dependence and inferiority, neither the great nobles, nor the people at large, would submit to grovel at the footstool of royalty. I feel this is true; for I feel that it is impossible for a king to reign by divine right ~~alone~~, except over a people, who are drilled from their youth upwards into a degrading and awful impression of kingly superiority, by these infinite gradations of servitude, this system of ranks and etiquette, by which a man is, at every step, and every moment of his life, reminded that other men are gods, and himself little better than a beast. When such feelings and impressions become, by habit and education, a part of the very nature of man, it is difficult, if not impossible, to make him comprehend our rational system of equality. He will confound the freedom from these abject restraints, with the licentiousness that overleaps those barriers which are essential to the existence of society; and, in attempting to rid himself of slavery, will become a madman or a disorganizer. In short, my dear brother, as it is impossible to make a white man of a negro, or wheat bread out of rye flour, so does it appear to me next to impossible to make rational, manly, high-spirited republicans, who resist oppression,

yet obey the laws, out of a population born in a state of dependence, and brought up in a manner worthy their birth. I believe our ancestors carried with them all the spirit of liberty England ever possessed, or what they left behind, was frightened away by the French revolution.

LETTER XXV.

DEAR BROTHER,

London.

IN my last two or three letters, I attempted to give you some idea of the real nature and spirit of this government, not by vague declamations, borrowed from their own writers, or the partial ignorance of foreigners, but by sketching some of those features, which, although they do not strike at first sight, finally, on a closer examination, are found to give a character to the whole composition. Much has been said and written of this government which it never deserved; and much which, if it ever merited, it merits no longer. But it is difficult to shake a long established belief, or to weaken our confidence in a good character, sustained for a considerable length of time. It is right it should be so; or else the fruits of a whole age of virtuous actions might be blasted in a moment by a breath of calumny.

As all things are however good by comparison, and as it is the custom of most Englishmen to in-

sist upon some mysterious, occult, invisible, and indefinable superiority of their government over all others, and most especially over our republic, it may be worth while to institute a short comparison between the two. Declamation is a good prop to error; but facts are the best support of truth.

The ends of all systems of government are perfectly simple, though the means of attaining them, in time, become so complicated as to baffle the sagacity of all human inquiry. I know of no other objects in the social compact, but that of security of person and property, and no other end in all the subsequent regulations of the system, but the institution of means to attain or preserve this security. In proportion as the people are protected by the government in the security of their persons and property, at the least possible sacrifice of either individually, is the excellence and purity of the system. There is nothing new in these positions, as indeed there is nothing new under the sun, but new fallacies, new absurdities, and new impositions. Truth is as old as the creation; but falsehood is born every day of the year.

Both person and property are best protected from domestic enemies, by equal laws, equally administered, and with an expense of time and money, which places them within the reach of ordinary persons. Are the laws of England equal in respect to all? By no means. I have shown you, that certain privileged classes are exempted by law from almost all those duties, penalties, and impositions, to which the great majority are subjected. From every species of exclusive, personal, or official privilege the people of the United States are free, with a single exception. The members of congress are exempt from civil arrest during the session, and in passing to and from the seat of government. This is but a trifling exception; yet

still I see no very cogent reason to justify it. It secures the benefit of a bankrupt member's services, but it may be reasonably questioned, whether a man, who cannot pay his debts, or give security for the payment, is a fit legislator for those who can. I am afraid there are too many of these threadbare philanthropists in our legislative bodies, or we should not see so many bankrupt laws, or rather general goal deliveries; nor hear so much about abolishing imprisonment for debt. For a bankrupt community, bankrupt legislators may do very well; but the debtor is not the proper person to make laws for the creditor.

But the equal operation of the laws upon the subject in this country is checked by other various causes, such as do not exist in ours, or are not of such extensive operation. The law's delays, and the lawyer's costs, are crying evils, to be sure, in the United States, but they are nothing, compared with the extent to which these abuses are carried in England. It has been alleged that the two abuses serve to correct each other, because, as a law-suit never comes to an end so long as the client has money, this very expense of carrying on a suit, by emptying his pocket, at length shortens the delay, ruining the client with least money, and thus bringing the suit to issue. On the other hand, the delays of the law very often deter people from going to law, and thus operate to save their money. Law-suits consequently diminish in number; but then, on the other hand, it certainly increases the temptation to get possession of the property of others by hook or by crook, when the expense of obtaining it back again being often considerably greater than the worth of the thing sued for, it is highly probable, that a reasonable man will put up with the injury, rather than ruin himself by seeking redress. - Poor Sir Watkin Lewes had a just claim

to a great estate in Wales, I think it was, which he recovered several times, but never got possession. In the mean time, the expenses of the suit brought him into a jail, where, after lingering several years, he died not long since. If I do not mistake, a final decision was about the same time given in Sir Watkins' favour. But the poor knight had luckily got the start of the justice of his country, and his heirs may prosecute their rights until they rot in jail. It is almost a maxim of law in the courts here, sanctioned by the opinion of the best judges, that a man, with a clear claim to fifty pounds, had better give it up, than go to law. A probate certificate, from the prerogative court of Canterbury, costs from a hundred to twenty thousand pounds; and it is a notorious fact, that the executors of the late duke of Kent refused to take out a certificate, because his exemplary royal highness, with a pension of, I do not know how many thousands sterling, his pay as a field-marshal, and various other emoluments, amounting to upwards of one hundred thousand dollars, died insolvent, and left his family as royal paupers to the charity of the nation. Wherever the delay and expenses of the law are carried to this extent, it cannot be pretended, that the rights and property of either rich or poor are well protected. With respect to securing the rights of person, it is an apt illustration to state the fact, that it cost Mr. Hunt, who is now a prisoner in Elchester jail, fifty pounds sterling, only to have an application brought before the King's Bench for his release from *solitary* confinement, to which he had *not* been sentenced.

Much of the security of person and property depends upon the peculiar character of judges and juries, as modified by their peculiar habits of thinking, and the relation in which they stand to the people and their government. If the judges and

sheriffs be immediately dependent on the king, or the executive power, there is the greater probability that the first will lean towards the throne, and the latter be more or less influenced by this species of interested loyalty, in the selection of juries in cases where the king is a party. The judges of England are appointed by the king; those of the federal government by the President, subject to the approval of the senate; those of the higher courts of the States, generally, either by the legislatures, or the governors, or by the governor with the consent of his council. The judges of England, although they cannot be removed except by impeachment, are still dependent on the crown for all anticipated honours; for titles of nobility; for pensions, and for more exalted stations on the bench; and lastly, for a seat on the woolsack. The lord chancellor, the most important of all the administrators of the law, and whose patronage is of immense extent, both in church and state, is removable at the pleasure of the king. In the United States, either directly or indirectly, every public officer looks to the people for any improvement in his situation. If a judge, he cannot expect to be translated into any civil office of greater dignity or emolument, except by preserving a good name with the people, by the strict discharge of his duties, and the highest decorum of conduct. This good opinion of the people is not to be gained by a lax administration of the laws relating to the rights of property, or by suffering criminals to escape punishment. It mainly depends upon his conduct in the capacity of umpire between the people and their rulers; on the disposition he evinces to stretch the prerogative of the ruler, or to protect the rights of the citizen from the encroachments of power. In proportion as he displays the one or other bias, he may expect to enjoy the affections of the people,

and the benefits which they have the power of bestowing. We have lately seen, in our country, a judge transplanted to the seat of government at Washington, and made Secretary of the Navy. Did he owe this to the favour of the executive, or the people? To the latter certainly; to the good opinion of his fellow-citizens, gained, not only by protecting the property of the people from the violation of lawless intrusion, but by protecting the person of the citizen from the aggressions of power. I can recall to mind various other instances of judges elevated to the station of chief magistrates of States, who owed their situations solely to their excellent character, as wise, temperate, and inflexible ministers of the law.

The relative excellence, then, of the judiciary systems of the two countries depends entirely upon the decision of the question, whether it be better for the judges to be inclined in favour of the rights of the citizen, or the pretensions of his rulers. In the ordinary functions of their office, as mere interpreters of the simple rules by which the rights of property, the judgments for debts, and the violations of the peace, are decided, there is little room for such predilection to operate, and it is probable that there will be little difference between the two classes of judges. But it is in those cases in which the rights of person and property become implicated in those political collisions, where the privileges of the citizen and subject come into a struggle with the interests or passions of their rulers, that the safety of both becomes principally dependent upon the bias of the judge, in favour of one or other party, and on the character of the jury. If they incline to the support of power, there is no safety for the weak; if they incline to the weak, they form an impenetrable

barrier against all oppression. In all cases, where the citizen or subject enters upon the exercise of his political rights, such as writing or speaking his sentiments of those in power, petitioning or remonstrating, he will be at the mercy of a judge and a jury, coming to his trial with a strong bias in favour of his prosecutors. On the other hand, a judge or jury, leaning towards the exercise of those popular privileges, the possession of which is essential to repress and restrain the excesses of power, and the abuse of authority, can never do any harm to the state that is well governed. The happiness of the people at large is the end of all good government; and the expression of our sentiments, on all occasions, is only to be feared by the tyrant, who is conscious that he does not deserve to govern. To me, therefore, it appears, that even the boasted judiciary system in this country, so far from being superior to ours in the United States, in being independent of the good will of the people, and dependent upon the king in the most essential points, is radically inferior in that view, in which it is always to be placed—as the interposing barrier between the power of the executive, and the weakness of the private individual. As respects the facts, I would appeal to the character of our judicial officers, to the absence of all complaints on the part of the people in all cases of person and property, and to the perfect security every man in the United States feels under the guardianship of the laws of his country. Arbitrary imprisonments, constructive libels, and imputed treasons, have been there unknown for years past; and whatever complaints have been made of your judges, have originated in the struggles between the prerogative of the general government and the rights of the States. On the contrary, scarcely a week passes here, in which

some obnoxious person is not fined and imprisoned by an arbitrary construction of the law of libel, blasphemy, or what not, by a judge of the crown, and a packed jury. This brings me to the consideration of the trial by jury, and the writ of habeas corpus, both so essential to the liberty of person, and the security of property.

The independence of an English jury, of the present day, has been greatly overrated, because, in a few instances, state prosecutions have failed in the city of London. This fact only proves what I have just urged, that an independence of the king, or at least, a partial dependence on the people, is essential to the security of the subject. The sheriff of London is chosen by the livery of London, which is essentially a democratic body. It is therefore highly probable, that in a cause where the rights of the people are opposed to the pretensions of the king, he will not summon a jury biased in favour of the latter. The acquittal of Hardy, or the condemnation of the Rev. Mr. Blacow, for a libel on the Queen, in the city of London, is no authority whatever for the general character of English juries, in cases where political feelings operate. They arise from the appointment of the sheriffs of London being in the people, and not in the king.

In all the counties of Great Britain, with perhaps one or two exceptions, where the right is vested in some nobleman, the sheriffs are appointed by the king. That his majesty and his council will select the most loyal supporters of the prerogative, is at least naturally to be expected, and most especially at the present crisis, when the people and the king are perpetually in conflict. In the large cities, the appointment of the sheriff is sometimes in the corporation or in the guilds; and in proportion as these are popular, or the

creatures of some courtier, which last is generally the case, the independence of juries may be inferred. Out of London, we hear of no acquittals of radicals, nor any condemnation of soldiers for riding over and shooting unarmed citizens, men, women, and children. The fellow that shot Honey, the other day, at Cumberland Gate, was, even in London, acquitted of murder, and remunerated by a subscription; while the wretched Cato-street conspirators, as they are called, who were spirited into a paltry plot by an emissary employed for that purpose by the secretary of state, were found guilty of treason—even in London. This is no surmise; the fact has been proved so unanswerably, that even the Courier was silenced, and the fellow, whose name is Edwards, has fled, it is said, to the United States. What an acquisition to our stock of imported worthies!

But there cannot be a more complete exemplification of the independence of an English jury, where the king's prerogative and the soldiers' rights are to be enforced against the life and limbs of the subject, than the affair of Manchester. The actors in that bloody tragedy have been all acquitted, although there is not a man in England, who dare maintain that their conduct was sanctioned by the laws of England. There was nothing established on the trial that, in the eye of the law, amounted to any thing like direct proof of any overt act, on the part of the assembled people, to justify the conduct of the soldiery on that day. Great efforts were made, to have the murderers tried where there was a chance of an independent jury; but in vain. The blood of English men, women, and infants, sunk into the earth unavenged, and the murderers were thanked by the king of England. After this, let no one say, that the

rights of persons are better secured in this country, by the judge or the jury, than in ours.

But even admitting the trial by jury, and habeas corpus, to subsist in this country in all their purity, still they are partially suspended, of late almost every year, under some pretence of public danger; that is, whenever the public sentiment, the servility of sheriffs, and the subserviency of juries, cannot be sufficiently calculated upon for the purposes of oppression. In Ireland continually, and in England and Scotland very often, these barriers of oppression are taken away for the time, in order to let in the blood-hound soldiery, whom I have seen panting to cut down their miserable countrymen, with ten times the eagerness they would encounter the foes of their country. What a state must this country be in, if such severities be necessary! and what a state must it be in, if they are practised without necessity! It is only to produce a letter from a mayor of Dublin, an Irish secretary, or an Irish lord-lieutenant, exaggerating those outrages to which hopeless misery is prone, and the parliament of England, the guardian of the rights of the whole empire—the very parliament, whose noble predecessors made war against their king, for daring to substitute arbitrary power for habeas corpus and trial by jury, will suspend them both in one day, ay, in one hour, without asking a question! A wretched panic of the slaves in office, at Dublin Castle, is echoed back, on the instant, by the slaves of St. Stephen's Chapel.

Again; the security of person is at the mercy of a press-gang, from whose lawless fangs no man with a ragged coat is exempt. Instances are continually occurring, where the sons of the country people, in roaming about London, and elsewhere at the naval stations, are kidnapped by the press-

gangs, and carried on board of ships, where it rests with the caprice, or the necessities of the officers, either to let him go or take him to sea, where he is not heard of by his friends for years. On the other hand, the security of property, at least of the produce of landed property, is, I may say, destroyed, by being subjected to taxation by a parliament, in which the far greater proportion of those who pay them have no representatives. If it be urged, that the security of property is not affected by this, I desire to compare the situation of this country with that of the United States. Does any man believe it possible, that the people of the United States, in any exigency, except where the existence of their country was at stake, would be brought to submit to a system of taxation like that now in full operation here? And if they did, under these circumstances, submit, does any one believe it possible, they would suffer it to continue a moment, after the necessity of making the sacrifice for the safety of the country had ceased? No violence would be required to free them from the burthen. They tax themselves at pleasure, and at pleasure free themselves, because the power that levies these burthens is, in truth and reality, and not merely in theory, their slave.

But admitting, for the sake of argument, that the two countries are on a par, with respect to the two great ends of government, security of person and property; I would then put their excellence to the test, by inquiring, which attains these great objects at the least sacrifice of property and independence? The comparison is perfectly simple, as respects the first. There are twenty millions of people in Great Britain, and ten in the United States. Of the former, one-seventh are paupers, not taxable; of the latter, about the same proportion are negroes, also not taxable; at least their

owners pay their taxes. We will put the negroes against the paupers, and the proportion will still remain the same ; that is, about double the number of taxable persons in this country, that there is in the United States. We will put the whole of the expenditures of the latter at twenty millions of dollars per annum, which is a very large allowance for the present year, I am sure, and contrast it with the 53,289,754 pounds sterling yearly expenditure of this government, including interest on the public debt. The mere annual expense of the British government, exclusively of the interest of the public debt, amounts to upwards of twenty-two millions of pounds sterling ; that is to say, at the rate of about twenty-two shillings sterling a head for every man, woman, and child in Great Britain. Add to this the interest on the public debt, the tithes, poor rates, &c. and it will amount to between two or three times as much more, making an average of about fourteen dollars a head for every soul in Great Britain. In the United States the average is less than two dollars, or about one-seventh. It will appear, therefore, that the people of the United States pay only one-seventh of the sum per annum for the security of person and property, that the people of this country do for the attainment of similar blessings. It remains now to inquire, what other advantages the people of this country derive from their government, to make it worth their while to pay so much more for it, than the people of the United States do for theirs.

In what do these advantages and blessings consist ? Is it in those distinctions in the different orders of society, that are perpetually forcing upon a vast majority of the people a painful conviction of their inferiority and degradation ? Is it in the absence of that consciousness of equality, which gives a man an importance in his own estimation, some-

what similar to that derived from the possession of wealth and honours? Is it in the want of that feeling of independence, derived from the actual ownership of the property on which he lives, which, in the present stage of human intellect, is one of the most widely diffused sources of sober and rational comfort? Is it in the deprivation of all participation in the choice of those kings, nobles, bishops, and legislators, for whose dignity and splendour they pay so dearly? Contrast the situation of the people of this country with that of ours, and there will be no need of answering these questions.

But does this enormous system of expenditure bring with it a greater degree of security to the nation abroad, or the government at home?

At this moment the system owes its chief support to a military force, distributed in the towns where the larger portion of the population resides, rather than to the voluntary submission of the people, founded upon a love of their country, and a reverence for authority. The wealth and resources too, which are wrung from the labours of the nation, are spent, for the most part, not in defending its rights, but in the maintenance of distant and expensive establishments, that drain the parent state, and furnish little else than the means of extending the influence of power by the agency of corruption. In the whole history of our country, since the establishment of its independence, there occur but two instances, where the government was obliged to resort to the aid of a military force for the purpose of executing the laws. At this moment, internal order is every where maintained in the vast limits of the United States, without the agency of a single soldier. Here, on the contrary, scarcely a week passes, in which the military is not actually called out, in support of the weakness of the civil power, against the overwhelming tide

of public discontent; and the history of Ireland is little else than a detail of military outrage, opposed to the outrages of a miserable populace, suffering for bread, and thirsting for revenge. In the only two struggles the United States have had with this power, they have suffered, it is true, but their final resistance has been successful; and at this moment, their security, as respects foreign aggression or invasion, is at least as well based as that of Great Britain.

Is the superiority of this government exemplified in the superior attachment of the great mass of the people, founded on superior happiness?

At this moment, the disaffection of a large portion is only restrained by the almost unlimited license granted to the soldiery, of outrage and massacre; and this disaffection is the consequence, not of mere abstract notions of right, but is the inevitable product of a widely extended distress, that has brought one-seventh of the people to beggary, and three-fourths of them to comparative want.

Is the superiority of this expensive system of government displayed in the pageantry of the monarch; the high-souled chivalry of the nobility; the superior sanctity of the hierarchy; the purity of the public morals; or the refinement of the public manners?

True it is, my dear brother, that his present majesty lives much more splendidly, and fares much more sumptuously, than the present worthy chief magistrate of our country, or any of his predecessors. And well he may. His yearly expenditure amounts to about four millions of dollars; a sum equivalent to the entire earnings of about thirty thousand of his liege subjects in some professions, and of sixty or seventy thousand in others. Our worthy chief magistrate, on the contrary, costs the nation only twenty-five thousand dollars, which is

about equivalent to the earnings of one hundred common labourers at the present rate of wages. Our chief magistrates, for the thirty years in which they have presided over the country, in mutual happiness and prosperity, have cost the nation seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars, about one-fifth of the cost of supporting majesty here for one twelvemonth. Now I think it may be fairly doubted, whether one year's services of his present majesty, even admitting he gave ten times the number of dinners and balls to the nobility, are worth five times as much as those of our five excellent presidents. Nay, I think I might almost venture to assert, that the conducting of a great people through the arduous struggles of a revolution, to the enjoyment of freedom and happiness, as did our Washington, is almost as great a service to the human race, as his present majesty ever did, or ever will perform, even if his allowance were trebled. True it is, that neither Washington, nor any of his successors in office, ever figured before a gaping, hissing, shouting, and grumbling mob, loaded with all the fripperies of superannuated vanity, in a coronation. Still it may be a question with philosophers, whether the sight of a coronation will make amends for the burthens it imposed upon the people; and whether George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe, who all wore plain coats, and never had a coronation, did not, each of them, contribute as much to the honour and happiness of their country, as his present Majesty, with his four millions a year.

But I am told here, that the people do not mind chains, if they be only well gilded, and that it is absolutely necessary to dazzle them now and then with fine shows, in order to keep them from feeling the burthens on their backs; like the horse in the fa-

ble, who was so pleased with his plated bridle that he forgot the curb. It may be so, but then it would be much cheaper, I think, to tickle Master John Bull with the sight of a sham coronation on the stage, and a sham king too, for that matter. I saw both the real and the theatrical coronation, and assure you, the latter was by far the more imposing.

Touching the high honour and chivalry of the nobles, I cannot say much in their favour. A more frivolous generation I have no where seen, except, perhaps, in Italy, where I once had the honour of knowing a certain Prince, the nephew of Cardinal R****, who, in a voyage from Malta to Naples, subsisted entirely on smelling bottles. For aught I see, they are quite as much given to petty vices as the lowest orders of the people. They keep their engagements, both of honour and honesty, with as little punctuality as a petty trader; their amusements are, for the most part, trifling and contemptible; their occupations frivolous or mischievous; and the only chivalry they seem destined to uphold, is that of the boxing school. Too many of them, after spending their fortunes in a dissolute youth, carry their battered bodies to the nuptial bed of some plebeian heiress, who exchanges her money for his Lordship's rank, and is neglected ever afterwards. Or they sell themselves to a ministry, who possess a capital sufficient to purchase by wholesale the whole peerage. I cannot therefore resist the impression, that if the honour and chivalry of England are in the keeping of the nobility, the exclamation of Edmund Burke, that "the age of chivalry is no more," is strictly applicable to the present time.

Touching, in the next place, the piety of the richly endowed clergy, which is one of the pillars

of the presumptive superiority of this boasted system, I only appeal to the complaints of all classes, not only those who are opposed to the system of tithes, but those also who are zealous in the support of the church establishment. Their neglect of the pastoral duties is a fact too notorious for denial, while their aptitude for worldly goods and worldly enjoyments is the common jest of high and low, in secret or in public. Both combined, are universally asserted to be the leading causes of the rapid progress of the dissenters, and the eventual downfall of the Established Church, which begins now to be anticipated as a possible event. Neglect of the performance of our prescriptive duties, and a disregard to the opinions of society, will sooner or later sap the basis of all institutions; nor can all the laws of man prevent the operation of causes, which equally build up and destroy religious and political fabrics.

Of the state of religion, morals, and manners, I have given you some sketches in my former letters. Where crimes are most frequent, and violations of decency most public and most common; it is but empty boasting to make pretensions to superior piety, morality, or refinement. There may be pious, virtuous, and refined individuals, but the nation can possess no extraordinary share of either. If we take this criterion, I apprehend it will be found, that England has little to boast of in these particulars. Certain it is, however, that in no city have I heard of so many crimes, and so many violations of public decency, as occur in London. If there be, in reality, any extraordinary degree of evangelical piety, or orthodox religion here, it does not appear to be of that species which holds the reins of human passions, and places the curb in the hard mouth of wilful wick-

edness. It seems to vent itself in strange and abstract doctrines of mysterious subtlety—in Bible and Missionary Societies, whose remote objects appear to attract almost exclusive attention, while the corruptions, that walk at noonday, and stink in our very nostrils, are either neglected, or become indifferent, by being so common. It would seem to consist in the doctrine of old fanaticism, or still older hypocrisy, of making the conversion of one Pagan an equivalent for the loss of a hundred Christian souls; of purchasing pardon for the habitual breach of moral laws and social duties, by an infuriated zeal in converting people who inhabit the uttermost parts of the earth. That such a perversion of the true ends of religion, and such principles of action, should lead to an era of multiplied crimes, and endless offences against human laws, is not any subject of surprise, since all human experience goes to prove, that the separation of morality and religion is in the end fatal to both.

But of all the assumptions brought forward in support of absolute power and boundless expenditure, that of making literature and the arts dependent upon such a state of things, is the least justified, either in theory, or by experience. Where, in the ancient world, did the human mind attain to the highest point of intellectual superiority, and the productions of genius reach their greatest perfection? Was it in the despotic monarchy of Persia, amid the riches and splendours of the court of Xerxes or Darius? No! it was in the little republics of Greece, and the great republic of Rome. The genius of both was reared and nurtured in the arms of freedom, and in the midst of freemen. In freedom it was born, and with freedom it expired. It shone indeed for a little while under the first dawnings of luxury and absolute rule, but it was in the lustre it had previously attained under the aus-

pices of freedom ; and it gradually faded and expired, as the remaining rights of Athens and Rome withered under eastern despotism or superstitious control.

Where was it that literature and the arts first awakened after the long sleep that succeeded the establishment of despotism in Greece and Italy ? In Florence, and the other Italian republics ; and that too at a period of comparative simplicity, both in manners and modes of living, and when the annual expenditures of all Italy did not amount to the personal revenue of the present king of England. It was then, under the patronage of merchants, that the masterpieces of painting and sculpture were produced, to which Europe has never since afforded a parallel ; it was then that the genius, which expired under the tyranny of the Cæsars and their successors, arose, as it were, from the dead ; it was then that music, poetry, and history, again flourished under the auspices of freedom, until the example was caught by surrounding monarchies, and the flame of genius was lighted even at the altar of despotism. Painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, still flourish in Italy, but with a vigour and lustre abated by foreign rule. The leaden sceptre of Austria is now upon Italy, and, as usual, the energies of fearful tyranny are now all bent to the purposes of making the extension of the empire of ignorance coequal with that of foreign despotism.

But of all the nations of Europe, France and England exhibit the most striking examples of the fallacy of this opinion, that literature and the arts are dependent on kings and nobility, wealth and luxury. The brightest men that France ever produced, arose precisely at the moment when the first blossoms of opening liberty began to put forth. The rays of their genius fell upon the little stran-

gers; and, under the influence of this kindly warmth, they grew in spite of the dark shades which power threw over them. They were the children of this new-born freedom, which the slow and gradual progress of human intellect had produced, and they became the fathers of still more vigorous shoots, that are still growing and expanding in that country. The greatest of these, instead of being protected and pensioned by their king, were prosecuted and exiled, and finally sought refuge in the free states of Holland and Switzerland, where alone they could give the reins to their genius, or develop those great truths which will yet, in all probability, go far to re-organize the systems of Europe. These great men owed nothing to kings, nobility, luxury, and wealth, but persecution. All these combined in one common effort to destroy their repose when living, and blast their reputations when dead. The conduct of the present ruler of France, is another illustration of the effects of luxury and power on literature and the arts. At this moment, he is lending all his bedridden energies to bring about the ignorance and superstition of the age of St. Louis. Whatever it may have been formerly, nothing is more evident now, than that luxury and power are the most deadly enemies to the progress of human knowledge, to literature, to the arts, to every thing that raises man above the level of a beast, and unfits him to be the slave of his equals.

If we inquire at what periods the genius of England displayed itself with the greatest vigour, and produced those masterpieces of which she is so justly proud, the answer will be fatal to the theory I am combating. The first and greatest name that occurs in English literature is Shakspeare, who lived in the time of Elizabeth, when the floors were covered with rushes, and the luxuries of noble

dames were draughts of beer and manchets of bread for breakfast. At this period too, a close examination of English history will show, that the free puritan spirit began to exhibit its first dawnings, and the tyranny of the Plantagenets and Tudors began to loosen its foundations in the English soil. In short, there was at that time a great flash of intellectual light; and the progress of the human intellect has, in all ages, indicated that of human freedom. Elizabeth, it is true, played the virago on more than one occasion; but her usual deportment towards the people was that of a mother rather than a mistress. There was certainly more freedom in England during her reign, than in that of her father, her sister, or any other sovereign of England from the days of William the conqueror. It is equally certain, that the genius of Shakspeare was not the product of an age of luxury or refinement. Neither is there any thing on record, except a vague tradition, that he wrote the second part of the Merry Wives of Windsor, at the command of the queen, to show that he owed either the fame or the fortune he acquired, to the patronage of any particular nobleman, or the bounty of his sovereign.

Shakspeare was contemporary with Ben Jonson, Spenser, and others, whose dramatic and allegorical poetry has never been since equalled in England, and whose exuberant genius has been the fount, from whence succeeding writers have drunk without acknowledgment. This early group was succeeded by others more witty and refined perhaps, until we come down to Milton and Dryden, the second great names in English poetry. During the whole of this period, England was agitated by those strengthening and vivifying principles of civil liberty; which eventually produced one revolution after another, until, finally, the government

became settled on a constitutional basis, suitable to the state of the times, and the spirit of that age. Milton, the noblest, the most simply antique, the most lofty, and the most inspired of all the English bards, was a republican, nurtured in the arms of freedom, and bearing, as the standard of his genius, the cap of liberty. We may infer also, that the loyalty of Dryden was more a compliance with time and circumstance, than a settled principle; for I have seen a copy of verses of his in an old collection of poems, printed in 1700, to the memory of Oliver Cromwell, in which are the following stanzas; which certainly appear to be the production of an unaffected admiration of his character.

“His grandeur he deriv’d from Heaven alone,
For he was great ere fortune made him so;
And was like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.
No borrow’d bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh laurels bring;
Nor was his virtue poisoned soon as born,
With the too early thought of being king,” &c.

Dryden and others paved the way for the age of queen Anne, which is, on all hands, considered one of the most brilliant periods in the history of English literature. If we compare the manners of that age with those of the present, it will be found, that neither the luxury of the nobility, nor the expenditures of the government, were a tenth part as great as at this time. Neither the monarch, nor his nobles, possessed a tenth part of the means of encouraging and patronising literature which they do now, and yet who will venture to compare the literature of England, at the present date, with that of the age of queen Anne, in the purity of its style, the dignity and simplicity of its character; the keenness of its wit; the richness of its sense

and sentiment; the every thing, in fact, that constitutes the essence of superiority? Under queen Anne, England was more cheaply and better governed than now; and a proof of it is, that the internal peace of the country was maintained without the aid of a swarm of cut-throat soldiers. The goodness of a government may almost always be tested by this criterion.

Without pursuing the inquiry any further, I think I have produced instances enough to prove, that neither excessive luxury, excessive inequality of wealth, nor any extraordinary degree of despotic power, is necessary to the progress or the perfection of literature. It will appear, I think, that the freedom of republics, the simplicity of republicanism, is a soil quite as congenial to the growth of literature as that of monarchy; and that this assumption of superiority, like most others, is without any foundation in the experience of ages. With regard to the fine arts, England, the richest, the most luxurious country in the world, is far behind the poorer countries of Europe. Her rich nobles have, indeed, bought fine pictures and statues, and encouraged foreign musical professors; but these arts have never taken deep root in this country. In painting, they have never equalled the second rate masters of Italy, nor even Spain, Germany, and France, except in the person of West, the American; and even now our two countrymen, Leslie and Newton, are the only young artists here, whose works promise any great degree of excellence in the higher branches of painting. They were lately obliged to elect them into the academy to keep up its credit. In sculpture, they have never produced a single *chef d'œuvre*; in architecture, no great master since the present age of luxury; and if they have any national mu-

sic in the three kingdoms, it is derived from Scotland, the poorest of them all. Where, then, is there any thing in the history of the fine arts in this country, to justify the assertion, that immoderate wealth unequally distributed, immoderate public expenditures, and monarchical institutions, are essential to the progress or perfection of either? Surely the free and generous spirit, imbued with the independent and unconquerable essence of genius, does not require the countenance of nobility, the pensions of kings, nor the tinsel trumpery of monarchy, to stimulate its highest exertions. The love of country, the approbation of our equals, the applauses of posterity, the hope of an immortal fame, are, I should think, incentives sufficiently strong, to awaken and to spur into action all the powers of the human intellect, unaided by the abject feeling of loyalty, or the degrading sense of individual patronage.

LETTER XXVI.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

KINGS would, at all times, I believe, if left to their choice, rather govern by opinion than by force, by love than by fear. An army of pensioned writers, when it will suffice to support the king's popularity, will, in most cases, be preferred to an army of soldiers to maintain his authority, for at least two special reasons. The former method is

by far the cheaper ; since a few pensions, a paltry title, a ring, a picture, or a letter written by his majesty's own hand, will very generally neutralize, if not correct, the most stubborn literary patriot, and so completely alter his perception of things, that a country, which only yesterday was the most oppressed and miserable, becomes to-morrow the happiest in the world. For instance, Thomas Campbell, whose noble and affecting strains on the subject of Polish freedom and Irish oppression are remembered by every American reader, has dwindled into the nominal editor of a tory magazine, and gone over from the oppressed to the oppressor. I do not say this change was wrought by a pension, of two or three hundred pounds a year ; but when a man changes his sentiments very suddenly, and receives a pension immediately afterwards, it is difficult to resist the conviction that there is some connexion between the two.

The laureat, Southey, was seduced from the arms of Wat Tyler, by the irresistible attractions of sack, and sugar. A hundred a year, and a butt of sack, did his business. They so wrought upon his conscience, that from a downright patriot, he became first a hypocritical flatterer of kings, and next a fanatical advocate of every species of pious fraud and kingly pretension. I verily believe the poor man is sincere now ; for hypocrisy is too wary and worldly-minded to give into such fantastic fooleries as the laureat has lately committed. It is often the case, that men are inducted into a great devotion for principles, to which they were at first but little attached, by the aid of a sound drubbing or two, which operates like persecution upon new modes of faith, making what was before perhaps little better than hypocrisy, a confirmed and obstinate conviction. Few persons have been more persecuted in this way than the unfortunate lau-

reat. When he was a patriot, he was terribly persecuted by the Anti-jacobin, which parodied his Sapphics, and, what every body thought impossible, made them even more ridiculous than they were originally. After he was converted to loyalty by sack and sugar, and a hundred a year, his old friends, whom he had abandoned, attacked him with every weapon of ridicule and severity; while his new allies, feeling rather ashamed of their new convert, left him to the poor consolation of praising himself, which he does now at every convenient opportunity. As he was drubbed into a perfect conviction of the truth of his newly adopted principles, so in like manner has he been convinced of his own great merit and talents by the ridicule and incredulity of the world. In attempting to make head against these, he was so often obliged to bear testimony in favour of himself, that he at length became a sincere convert to his own absurdities, and grew to believe in himself, as a man comes to believe in a story of his own invention, by dint of eternal repetition. What the laureat does with his butt of sack is a profound secret in the republic of letters. He cannot drink it, certainly, or else Jack Falstaff was even a greater liar than he has credit for being. If, as he affirms, "a good sherris sack hath a two-fold operation"—if "it ascends me to the brain, and there dries the vapours," the Laureat had better set about drinking it, for "by'r Lady," brother, another birth-day poem will finish honest Bob Southey, unless he disperse the aforesaid vapours. He begins to reverse all the rules of composition of late; for it may lawfully be said of him, that he writes prose like a madman, and poetry like a fool. I am sorry for him; for, notwithstanding his overbearing self-sufficiency; his desertion of the cause of freedom; his virulent invectives against his

opponents; his rampant conceit, and his utter want of all literary courtesy; I am assured that his character in private life is amiable and exemplary. But to return to the subject.

An army of authors is a much cheaper support to royalty than an army of soldiers, and has this special recommendation besides, that it can not only uphold the king's authority while living, but give him a good name after death. This last, you know, is a great object with all great persons, especially those least deserving of the veneration of posterity, and therefore not willing to take chance of its award without a little special pleading in their favour. It is probably for these good and sufficient reasons, that all cunning monarchs, since the time of Augustus Cæsar, have taken special care to pension certain historians, poets, and philosophers, at the expense of the people, who pay for the king's praises, as well as for the king's prayers. Observing, as they did, that the praises of Virgil and Horace, who grew rich by the gratitude of Augustus, got him a great reputation for virtues which there is no other evidence of his possessing, and covered his faults with the splendid mantle of poetry, succeeding monarchs took the hint, and resorted to this easy mode of patching up a reputation. Charity to authors covers more sins than almost any other charity. Poets and men of letters have generally been willing enough to barter praise for money, whenever they could make so advantageous an exchange; and those who disdained a pension, were generally seduced by a ring or a complimentary letter. The whole band of scholars and poets, pensioned by Louis the Fourteenth, united in full chorus in praise of that monarch, though the history of his private life abounds in weakness and sensuality, while his public character is stained with a thou-

sand acts of tyranny and ambition. But it would seem he made amends for all this, by bribing those who stood between him and the just award of posterity ; and, accordingly, the recollection of his vices and his weakness, has been buried under a mass of venal adulation.

Hitherto, until our present republican age, as it may be called, the people had so little to do, and so much to suffer, in the affairs of government, that the agency of the literati was principally employed in patching up the posthumous reputation of royalty. The ambition of monarchs was, moreover, principally excited by the hope of extending their dominions abroad ; and if they made war at all, it was with a special view to foreign conquest. From their own people they had little to fear, and to them they addressed themselves, not for praise, but money. Taxation was the great object of their internal economy ; and as the people had nothing else to do but pay, it was of little consequence whether they adored or despised their king.

But the trade of a king is not near so good as it used to be. At this time, when there seems to be a general rebellion of the human understanding against the abuses and exactions of antiquated tyranny, it has become indispensable for royalty to turn its attentions more particularly to the people. Accordingly, the great object of the political craft of this country, and of European monarchies, is to deceive the nations, not only with respect to the policy of their government, but the character of their kings. To maintain their authority at home, and not to extend their power abroad, is their cue. For this purpose, it is considered equally essential to laud the characters and manners of kings ; to maintain the superiority of that system of government of which they are

the heads ; and to denounce, on all occasions, those principles of freedom, which are as much, and as surely, the product of intellectual advancement, as the blossom is of the sun.

The whole tide of corruption has consequently turned into these channels ; and in order to render the means of depressing mankind more effectual, it has become more than ever necessary, that the press should be either corrupted or enslaved. You perhaps have not remarked it, but it is becoming every day more and more evident, that republicanism and republicans must be either rendered odious and detestable in the eyes of nations, by reiterated falsehoods and misrepresentations, or there will be shortly little security for the thrones of England and Europe. One or other, the old or the new world, must change its governments.

A free press is certainly a powerful engine in producing revolutions ; but not exactly, I think, in the way of making the people sensible to their sufferings, so much as by destroying the popularity of their rulers, communicating a general sentiment throughout a nation, and organizing a general plan of resistance or co-operation. When a people are suffering actual evils from their government, it requires no prophet to tell them so ; and when they are prosperous and happy, all the exhortations of demagogues will hardly convince them they are miserable. The press can do many things, but it never produced of itself a revolution in any government, without the aid of more powerful and immediate causes. It is, I know, fashionable for the advocates of ancient abuses to put the whole blame of the people's disaffection to the government, here and elsewhere, arising from actual distress, or a sense of degradation, upon mischievous books, pamphlets, and newspapers. Denying, as they do, that the people have any

cause of complaint under these excellent systems, they have no other refuge but to place their disloyalty to the account of a licentious press, and a relaxation of religion and morals. Two objects are sought to be attained by this—to gain a pretext for restraining its liberty, and to impose upon the world an opinion, that the people are only disaffected, not miserable.

But though I am inclined to think the influence of the press, in producing political revolutions, somewhat overrated at present, still it is of sufficient consequence to make it a great object, to convert it into a tool or a victim—to destroy its influence, unless it can be either bribed or frightened into the support of corruption and delusion. Even standing armies can now no longer be relied upon to sustain the weakness and the vices of corrupt governments, nor are the purse and the sword sufficient to overawe or restrain public opinion. A plan has therefore been devised, and is now in most promising progress, both here and on the continent of Europe, for controlling the freedom of the press, on one hand by fines, prosecutions, and censorship; and on the other, to render it subservient to the purposes of antiquated oppressions, ignorance, and superstition, by means of pensions, patronage, sinecures, and paltry titles, that sink the man of genius into a mere courtier.

In the progress of this deep laid plot against the human understanding, we have seen, that only those republican writers whose efforts were not the most dangerous, either from want of talents, or of a popular mode of addressing the multitude, are tolerated. The moment a popular writer becomes dangerous by his power of addressing the public feelings, himself and his writings are singled out for the lash of the law, or the bar of the church. Under some pretence of blasphemy, if they can

find no other, the author is prosecuted, fined, and ruined; and his book, if not entirely suppressed, becomes an object for all the hirelings to bark at, from the *Quarterly Review* to *Blackwood's Magazine*.

But in a government like this, in which the whole wealth of the state can be employed almost at will in the wages of corruption, the means of influencing and controlling the press are not confined to mere oppression and punishment. If, for instance, a writer possess too much courage to be frightened, or too much honesty to be bribed into a sacrifice of his principles, they set the *Quarterly Review* upon him. That excellent, conscientious, and disinterested publication, begins by charging him with radicalism and infidelity. The *Literary Gazette* repeats the tale to the *New Monthly* and the *John Bull*; the *New Monthly* to the *Beacon* and *Blackwood's Magazine*; and thus the cry is sounded from the *London Monument* to *Edinburgh Cross*. This never fails to alarm the rich and privileged orders; in fact, all those whose opinions have great influence in society, and to whom an author looks up, not only for reputation, but patronage, at least so far as to the purchase of his book. Few men, however great may be their civil courage, can resist a combined and successful attack upon their purse and character at the same time. It therefore happens, in a vast many instances, that, unless the *Edinburgh Review* and its humble followers take up the cudgel, on the other side, the poor man recants in his next publication, accommodates himself to the views of our ministerial critic, and sacrifices his principles to save the remnant of his good name, and find purchasers for his book.

Others, however, who, like Mr. Southey and Mr. Gifford, are naturally inclined to become pen-

sioners and parasites, have their virgin purity assailed and speedily overcome by the seductive applications of certain agreeable sinecures, that are generally found to be quite irresistible. One of these, it is well known, caused Mr. Southey to abjure his *Jdan of Arc* and *Wat Tyler*, and fairly converted him from *Dom Daniels*, jacobin epics, and republican sapphics, into a loving coadjutor of Messrs. Gifford and Canning, who, erewhile, set the whole universe laughing at him and his sapphics in the *Anti-jacobin*. That arch enemy of our country, Mr. William Gifford, is clerk to the honourable band of pensioners, an excellent place, with a good salary, nothing to do, and twelve hundred buttons to his coronation coat. This is as it should be. There is a fitness of things in a pensioned writer being clerk to a band of pensioners.

Thomas Campbell, alack for genius! is also a pensioner of the king, and has been placed at the head of the *New Monthly Magazine*, with the well known object of putting down, or superseding, the *Old London Monthly*; for you must know it is common here, not only with tavern-keepers, who let out their houses to the public, but also with authors, who let out their consciences to the best paymaster, to juggle each other out of his custom, by putting up a similar sign; that is to say, christening their new bantling by the name of some well known and popular establishment. There is something exceedingly contemptible in this; but really, the arts of literature, as practised here now, graze very closely upon the skirts of the noble art of swindling. This setting up a spurious magazine, with the same title which is borne by one already popular and well known, to my mind, is very little better than getting into society, and borrowing money, under the name and on the credit of some respectable person. The mere tagging of

the epithet "New" to it, is nothing, since the generality of people will suppose it nothing more than a new series of the same work.

The *New Monthly* is, in every respect, a complete contrast to the old *Monthly Magazine*—every way inferior in talent, in principle, instruction, and amusement. The old *Monthly Magazine* has for many years past been conducted with much ability; and is, at this moment, in my opinion, the best publication in Great Britain of the kind. The *New Monthly*, on the contrary, (I must beg Lady Morgan's pardon,) is a mere collection of frivolous articles, principally composed of notices of second hand German literature; letters from Grimus Short; abortive attempts at the pathetic, and still more abortive attempts at wit and satire. The two last numbers are beneath all lowliness. With the exception of some extracts from Mr. Campbell's lectures on poetry, which have been already published; an article of M. Sismondi, by no means remarkable; and a few gleanings from M. C.'s *Port Folio*, there is nothing worthy of attention, except an article, professing to be an apology for a gross attack upon the American character and manners, in one of the early numbers, written, as Mr. C. says, "by a friend." It is good to have an anonymous friend sometimes to lay the blame upon. With unparalleled urbanity, Mr. C. denies that we are all arrogant, garrulous, and offensive in argument; assures his readers he has known many very decent, good sort of people from our side of the water; that he admires Washington and Franklin; and actually excepts Mr. Irving and Messrs. Leslie and Newton from the curse of barrenness in literature and the arts, denounced upon our unfortunate country! If this do not satisfy our people, I do not know what will; especially when

they find this excellent apology backed by a series of doggerel poems, (I suppose by Mr. C.'s *friend*), entitled the "Land of Promise," in which the same, and ten times worse, charges than those contained in the obnoxious article, are over and over again insinuated with a view to disparage our country, and deprive it of all the allurements of peace, freedom, and happiness. It is something, however, to have gained any thing in the shape of a retraction of unjust aspersions; and I earnestly hope, that Mr. Walsh, Mr. Everitt, and others, who have been abroad, and looked under the Lion's skin, will continue promptly to refute and expose these misrepresentations as they appear. As Mr. Walsh brought the Edinburgh Reviewers to a *denial*, at least, of their hostility; so has Mr. Everitt brought Mr. Campbell to an apology, which, to say the least of it, is not much worse than the original offence. In time they will be made to feel, perhaps, a sense of the injustice they have done us; and if not, a manly disposition to return their injurious aspersions with interest, will most likely work the same end. Where there is neither courage, nor magnanimity, submission only provokes new insults. This haughty power has never, on any occasion, condescended to do us justice, but when she has been made to feel that our country was not to be despised.

But to return. The old Monthly Magazine has, on the contrary, always displayed a most liberal disposition towards our country, and dealt with us in the spirit of friendly intercourse. It has, on all occasions, been the advocate of rational freedom, and maintained, with equal zeal and ability, those sober doctrines of political right, which are as free from the license of anarchy, as they are from the chains of despotism. It has always spoken with a just discrimination of our character,

manners, and literature ; neither elevating us above the scale of human excellence, nor debasing us to the level of profligate boors. In short, if we are to depend upon foreign periodical literature, the old Monthly Magazine is, beyond doubt, in every point of view, entitled to the first selection, since it neither pampers our vanity, nor outrages our just feelings of pride and patriotism.

Besides Messrs. Gifford, Southey, Campbell, and others, there are hundreds of inferior note, at least that are not so well known on our side of the water, who are in the enjoyment of places, pensions, and patronage of some sort or other. I will not trouble you with any more of these. It is sufficient for me to assure you, that very little independence is to be looked for either in the Reviews or Magazines, with few exceptions. Almost every one of these was either originally established for certain religious or political objects, or has been seduced by bribery and patronage to become a hot partisan. The government having the heaviest purse, and the most extensive patronage, is of course the best paymaster, and consequently retains by far the greater proportion of authors, either as apologists of itself, or calumniators of others. Hence it is, that we see them industriously employing all their learning and talents in propping up old abuses, and recommending new ones ; mingling the praises of religion with the grossest flattery of those whose whole conduct belies its precepts ; covering the indulgence of the bitterest, most malignant passions, with the thin pretext of orthodox piety ; making a parade of their faith in ribald farce and impious tragedies ; spicing the keenest conflicts of interest and ambition with an ample sprinkling of pure ministerial orthodoxy ; and joining their voices to the full chorus of cant, which, under the auspices of the Holy Alliance,

now echoes through half the world. It is in this way they either repay the bounty of the ministry, or insinuate themselves into the lap of new rewards, by means of new services.

Thus it happens, that the light of literature, at present, in this portion of the world, instead of leading to the temple of reason and virtue, is used, for the most part, as a decoy to the darkness of the tomb. Subservient, in a considerable degree, to the cause of tyranny and superstition, it has become the unblushing advocate for the continuance of all those abuses of church and state, which originate, and are fostered, in the ignorance of mankind. The more I see of the effects of royal and ministerial patronage, the more I am satisfied, that, in the present state of the world, this mode of encouraging genius is, on the whole, very unfavourable to its highest and most beneficent exertions. Liberty is the cradle of genius, and despotism its grave. It survived a little while under the wing of absolute power in Athens and Rome; but it was no longer than while the infant vigour, derived from its freedom, continued to resist the effects of its decline in the shade of lordly patronage. It gradually lost its strength, its simplicity, its virtue, and its divinity, and finally gave place to the dogmas of monks, and the quirks of theological metaphysicians, confounding themselves and their readers in a web of subtleties, where the spider and the fly were alike irretrievably entangled.

The emblem of genius is pictured with wings, to indicate that her flights should be free as the birds of the air. This freedom can never be fully exercised, where it appeals for its honours and rewards to the will of a tyrant, instead of the impartial award of our cotemporaries and posterity. It cannot be expected to indulge the glow of generous feeling; to propagate and enforce the noble and

sublime doctrine of personal and intellectual freedom ; or to become the champion, the oracle, the high priest of mankind, when chained to the car of royalty, and dependent on a king, whose authority, perhaps, is founded entirely upon the ignorance and superstition of his people. When a writer once consents to receive a benefit, be it what it may, the tenure of which is, that he shall not write any thing not palatable to the patron, he sells his birth-right for a mess of pottage ; the wings of his genius are clipped by the sword of power, and his intellectual faculties become cramped in their exercise. When old Faustus, according to the story, sold himself to Satan, he gained by his bargain, at least, an enlargement of his powers, both of mind and body ; his genius expanded, and he was enabled to comprehend what was before beyond the reach of his mind. But when Messrs. Southey and Campbell sold themselves to the king, they seem to have lost the talent they before possessed ; and, like the traitor Arnold, carried with them nothing but their disgrace. The indifferent poetry of the patriot Southey, has become ten times more so since he became a pensioner ; and the genius of Thomas Campbell seems to have deserted him, the moment he entered within the magic circle of ministerial patronage.

In an age of ignorance and superstition, it may be that literature will find it necessary to appeal to an enlightened monarch, or his minister, for that support which the indifference of the public denies him ; or for that protection which the bigotry of ecclesiastical power renders necessary. But at this time, when the taste and liberality of the people are amply sufficient to remunerate the highest efforts of genius, it is not necessary that it should grovel at the foot of power for protection.

nor prostitute its independence for bread. It is now but seldom that talent appeals in vain to the patronage of nations, when it comes recommended by independent principles and honest patriotism. A people that wish to be free, must take the exclusive control of literature out of the hands of their governments.

It cannot be denied, that scholars and men of genius in former ages, owed much to the patronage of princes, and that literature has been indebted to them for an early protection and encouragement, highly favourable to its advancement. But this was before the people began to read, and their kings to be afraid of the consequences of enlightening their subjects. In those days monarchs, so far from fearing the people, were exclusively jealous of the church and nobility; and, consequently, a philosopher, who exposed their usurpations and undermined their influence; or a wit, who made their vices the subject of ridicule, was pretty sure of the protection of the sovereign, so long as he could afford it without endangering his crown. Now, however, the case is altered. The king, the nobility, and the church, make common cause against the people; and the writer, who expects to be pensioned or patronized by either, must task his powers, not to enlighten, but to confound; not to raise, but to depress mankind in the scale of being. While he carries the pretensions of power to the extremest verge of usurpation, he must ridicule the just complaints of the people; representing their sufferings as the result of their own vices; ridiculing their pretensions to a voice in the state, and picturing them as inferior beings, who derive their sole consequence in the world from their capacity to pay taxes to the king, and tithes to the church.

Having by mere chance got upon the subject of literature, I will, in my next, proceed to give you a short sketch of the present state of the book-making and bookselling business, and the various arts by which authors are puffed into a short-lived renown. To this I may add the opinions of the better sort of judges here, concerning the merits of certain fashionable writers, who have thrown Homer, Milton, Dryden, and Shakspeare into the shade; and whose fame, like a rolling snow-ball, after accumulating to a mighty mass, disappears, for the most part, in one day before the warm rays of returning reason.

LETTER XXVII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

MUCH of the lighter kind of literature here, such as poetry, novels, and the like, having no bearing on politics, is dependent on the patronage of the booksellers, between whom and the authors there is a good deal of by-play and management. A combination of booksellers can easily produce a gale of popularity, that will frequently waft a book through half a dozen editions. When they find a poet somewhat better at a rant than his fellows, or a novel writer gifted with a more than ordinary talent for caricaturing human nature, they commonly unite to give him a *run*, as it is called, for a season at least, because it is indispensable to the

profits of their business, that there should be some few authors, whose names alone will ensure the sale of their works.

You are to understand, that there is abundance of second and third rate reviews and magazines, in one way or other partially under the influence of booksellers, and who will at any time say a good word for a book, if the author or publisher will only send them a copy, with a polite note, complimenting their taste, and calling their review or magazine, "your valuable publication." These are set to work to inflate the reputation of the fortunate authors, selected by the trade for a run for the season. The impulse given by these means in London, soon extends to all the provincial towns. Edition after edition is put forth with inconceivable rapidity, and the author becomes famous for at least nine days, while the booksellers laugh, it may be, in their sleeves, and pocket the money. Here, in London, the people of real taste, who are not led away by this whiff of popularity, laugh at all this mummary. The provincial towns, however, oftener yawn than laugh over the book, without daring to dissent from the unquestionable award of the London Literary Gazette, or the anonymous testimony of some newspaper critic. In a little while they wake up, and after rubbing their eyes and yawning some twenty times, begin to suspect that they want taste, rather than that the author lacks talents, or the reviewer judgment. As no man, however, can permanently cherish the idea of being a blockhead without becoming either a sage or a madman, these doubts settle gradually into a conviction that the book is deficient in merit, rather than the reader in taste. The delusion is then over—the bard or the novelist walks quietly into oblivion—the booksellers jingle their money, and prepare to

start another of these overgrown yearlings. Thus runs the race of this species of literature, and thus are honest England and simple America played with by reviewers and booksellers. There was, a few months ago, a genius called the Rev. Mr. Croly, that always wrote upon the hot crust of a volcano, who was patted on the back until he actually stood beside some of the great poets without blushing. On the contrary, he determined to make hay while the sun shone, in the true spirit of a modern bard. He wrote poetry faster than the "great unknown;" and, by means of divers blasts of the reviewers' trumpets, actually made a little fortune, before the town discovered he had asses' ears; and was a most lusty brayer.

There are some of the booksellers here, who, without this combination, ensure a very considerable sale for a work, by simply publishing it with their names. Among these, the most distinguished is Mr. John Murray, a worthy and respectable man, whose character, I believe, is without reproach. He has general orders from a great number, not only of the booksellers, but of the nobility and gentry, for one or more copies of every new work that issues from his press. Thus the first edition of a new book is, I am told, generally bespoken, and a second becomes necessary. Mr. Murray is, besides, as you know, publisher of the *Quarterly Review*; and though I do not mean to say there is any collusion, yet it were a disgrace to the human heart to suppose, that the intimate association, the community of feelings and interests, thus produced between him and the editors of that work, did not bring about a mutual good will. Fractious and intolerant as are these literary bullies, they assuredly cannot resist Mr. Murray's excellent dinners, and far-famed Port. Having thus let you into secrets, that may, perhaps, in some de-

gree, account for the fleeting popularity so many inferior productions of literature have enjoyed in this country, and in the United States, I will now proceed with other details.

Literature, like almost every other trade in this country, is not only overstocked with workmen, but with a vast many very indifferent ones, and it is with their books as with their other manufactures—if they did not find an extensive market in our country, one half of the artists would starve. It is inconceivable what a vast literary taste there is in England; that is to say, a taste for literary scandal, tittle tattle, reviewing, and magazing. The number of these publications are as the leaves of the trees, the sands of the sea; and their contents of such a nature, that to look into them is like looking for a grain of wheat in a hundred bushels of chaff. Opinions of books that the critics never read, and of things they cannot comprehend; trumpery provincial antiquities; puffings of quack authors, quack politicians, quack philanthropists, and quack doctors—new revivals of old absurdities, or new discoveries of exploded and forgotten things—anecdotes familiar to every general reader—together with the fashions, lists of promotions, marriages and deaths, murders and executions—these constitute the great mass, among which, however, will occasionally be found an able scientific article, a well written essay, and a capital engraving. Indeed it may with great truth be said, that these publications owe their greatest beauties to the engravers. The horses, dogs, fiddlers, players, and great men, are beautifully done.

I perceive some of our booksellers in the United States, not content with retailing the contents of these valuable productions by piece-meal, as has hitherto been practised, have undertaken the task of giving a republication of two or three of

them entire. Among the happy few thus selected from the mighty mass, is Blackwood's Magazine, one of the most virulent opposers of those principles of liberty, cherished, as I do still hope, by our countrymen, to be found in all the three kingdoms.—the very echo of the Quarterly Review. It is therefore a most apt selection, and does quite as much honour to our national taste, as our admiration of counsellor Philips; its chief articles being nearly equal to the counsellor's speeches in their inflated style, and incongruous metaphors. It is a disgrace to the talent of our country, that it does not furnish its own periodical works, and a reflection on the public taste, that it selects this magazine for republication.

It may possibly be news in your retired village to tell you, that the editor of this ferocious and bouncing magazine, is the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, and that he exceeds all living creatures in puffing his worthy father-in-law. It was he that christened him the "Great Unknown," if I do not mistake, and on all occasions he is foremost in his offerings of incense at the shrine of his idol. One might suppose that a sense of decorum would restrain him from this unblushing adulation; but they don't mind these things here, where it is almost as common for an author to puff his own book in the magazines, as for a quack doctor to be his own trumpeter in the newspapers. It is related to me, by persons whose opportunities of information are unquestionable, that if you could trace the approbation or censures of these magazines and reviews to their true source, they would, nine times in ten, be found to originate in personal, political, and religious antipathies or attachments, or in some holy alliance for mutual defence and mutual praises. In fact, such is the notorious prostitution of these reviews, that the real admirers of literature, who

are not wedded to some political party or other, pay no sort of attention to their decisions, from a conviction that they originate in impure motives. A great many books, which were barked at by the whole pack, have attained an extensive circulation, in spite of the hue and cry of canting hypocrisy, and canting criticism. Such has been the case with Lady Morgan's late works, even in spite of that fantastic affectation of style for which her ladyship is so notorious. On the other hand, a vast many books, which they have attempted, with all their might, to impose upon the patronage of the public, have already sunk into the bottomless pit of oblivion. It begins to be understood that this reviewing is a trade, and that their conductors must not fail to please their customers at all hazards. Hence, when any obnoxious opinions come abroad, and especially any that smack of republicanism, if the book be written with the pen of an angel, it stands no more chance of receiving quarter here, than a heretic among so many monks of the twelfth century. The author will be served by these literary judges like poor Naboth; he will be accused of blasphemy, and lose at least his reputation, if not the harvest of his little vineyard. On the contrary, if he should happen to be the greatest blockhead in the world, he may be sure of a good word, if he will only calumniate the whole mass of mankind, except the rich and noble, by calling them "deluded wretches," and placing their exertions to obtain bread to the account of an unprincipled disregard of all human obligations. It is in this way that writers attain to honours and rewards in England just now, without the display of a single talent, except the talent of glossing over the corruptions of the higher, and insulting the distresses of the lower, orders.

Sir Walter Scott owes much of his success, and still more of his knighthood, to his politics, which are high tory. A curious affair came to light the other day, which lets us into the secret of Sir Walter's merits in the sight of my lord the king. People in America think he was knighted for his genius. It seems a paper was not long ago set up in Edinburgh, called the "Beacon," which turned out even more libellous than Blackwood's Magazine, and exceeded that excellent production in its praises of Sir Walter. Almost every person of note, obnoxious on the score of his opposition to the court politics, was libelled in the grossest manner. Among these was a Mr. Stuart, who, in the course of his inquiries as to the persons responsible for the attack, discovered that the paper was patronised by an association of loyal persons, each of whom had signed a bond to contribute a hundred guineas to its support in case of necessity. Among these munificent patrons of literature were Sir Walter Scott, and the lord advocate for Scotland, each of whom had subscribed his hundred guineas. Upon this discovery, Stuart opened a correspondence with the lord advocate, which resulted in his lordship's discovering the libels on Mr. Stuart. The association for the encouragement of literature, hereupon finding the affair was likely to turn out rather serious, cancelled the bond, and dissolved partnership. The sole object of the Beacon was to single out persons, obnoxious from their opposition to the court, as objects for personal defamation. It attempted also a contest with the "Scotsman," the most powerful and ably conducted newspaper in the three kingdoms. As was to be expected, it sunk under the struggle, and confined itself altogether to libels afterwards.

I have seen it stated in print, and not contradicted, to my knowledge, that Sir Walter is actu-

ally co-proprietor and co-editor of Blackwood's Magazine, which praises him so lustily. I merely give you the fact, without vouching for any thing. Thus much is certain, however, that this Magazine is considered as the most virulent partisan of principles entirely at war with the happiness and prosperity of our people; that it has been convicted of at least a dozen libels upon the characters of private individuals; and that, it is noted particularly for its offensive articles concerning our country. In a late number of this work, is a tale, called "the Floridian Pirate," grossly libelling and calumniating the people of the southern and western States, and in which it is boldly insinuated, that to tie a planter to a tree, set fire to his house, and commence a piratical warfare against white men, are not only justifiable, but meritorious acts of heroism.

Of a similar character and principles, is the *New Monthly Magazine*, also, as I perceive, selected for re-publication in the United States, in preference to others of a different stamp. It is not so open and offensive in its hostility, but still there is scarcely a number appears, that does not squint ill-naturedly towards our country and its institutions. Ridicule of the peculiar habits of the people, their sanguine anticipations of the future, and other little peculiarities, are fair exercises of ingenuity and wit enough. This is what all nations indulge in towards each other. But when this satire degenerates into malignity, and proceeds, under the cover of various disguises, to undermine the respect of foreigners for our government and its institutions; to give distorted and offensive sketches of persons and things, calculated to degrade and disgrace a whole people, it passes the bounds of authorized ridicule, and becomes a distorter of truth and a mis-stater of facts.

It becomes unworthy of our toleration, much more of our patronage.

I regret to see Mr. Campbell lending his name to such a publication as this. Though it may perhaps be for his immediate interest to implant in our country a rooted antipathy for his name, and a lasting contempt for his principles, it might be worth his while to recollect, that the affectionate admiration of a new world is not to be lightly forfeited by one who values his immortal fame. To be read, admired, and cherished by growing millions, as the author of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, the *Pleasures of Hope*, and *Erin go Bragh*, is something better in the end, than to be remembered hereafter by perhaps thrice as many human beings as Britain now holds, as the petty editor of petty squibs and sarcasms, contemptible indeed in themselves, but deriving point and consequence from peculiar causes, that will possibly preserve them from merited oblivion. Men like Mr. Campbell would do well to bear in mind, that the time is not far distant, when they must look across the Atlantic for by far the greater proportion of their admirers, or enemies; and that the people of the United States are among those, of all others, the least likely to select, as objects of respect and veneration, writers who ridicule their institutions, or calumniate their country. Although at this moment, there is a sufficient number of foreigners in the United States, whose attachment to royalty and its glittering train, is gratified with sneers against the country that enriches, the government that protects, and the people that received them into its bosom; still they constitute but a small, a very small portion. They are neither the people of the United States, nor do they belong to the people. They either return from whence they came, or they remain, and their posterity will re-

ward with hatred or contempt those sentiments which rendered the *New Monthly Magazine* the favourite of their fathers. Mr. Campbell may perhaps be a little mortified at the evanescent glories of a Scott, Byron, and Moore, and justly question our taste on the score of the apparent preference given to their poems over his *Gertrude of Wyoming*, a work peculiarly dedicated to our patronage: but this is but a temporary fashion, and, like other fashions of the day, will pass rapidly away. When the three poets, just named, are remembered only by the wonder of mankind at the fame they once acquired, not by the admiration of the genius they displayed, Mr. Campbell will be admired in America, unless he forfeit his claim by present and future offences. Perhaps, too, long after Mr. Campbell is forgotten here, his *Gertrude of Wyoming* will preserve his name from oblivion in the new world. A temporary neglect seems to be the fate of all those productions of genius that are destined to live in the future. Whether it be, that we never judge rightly of our cotemporaries, or that posterity delights in reversing the judgments of a preceding age, I will not say; but I will venture to predict, that the poem I am speaking of is not destined to oblivion.

Next to the trade of magazing and reviewing, I find the biographies of the middling sort of great men in the greatest profusion here, and every day reminds me of Cowper's admirable epigram:

"O! fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot."
"So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale worn out News,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire,
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire;
There goes the parson, most illustrious spark,
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk!"

The particulars of these biographical budgets also call to mind a passage in an old author, where "Memory" complains thus :

"I remember, in the age of Assaracus and Ninus, and about the wars of Thebes, and the siege of Troy, there were few things committed to my care but those that were well worth preserving ; but now every trifle must be wrapt up in the volume of eternity. A rich pudding wife, or a cobbler, can't die, but I must immortalize them in an epitaph. A dog cannot commit in a nobleman's shoe, but it must be sprinkled in the chronicles ; so that I never could remember my treasury so full, or so empty of honourable and truly heroic actions."

One might be almost tempted to believe the writer of the foregoing passage had anticipated the present taste of the English public. If a clergyman, through the patronage of some great man, rises to the distinction of a stall ; if a doctor practises physic with tolerable success ; or a country squire owns a famous racer, or hunts a pack of stanch hounds, he is in good time pretty sure of a biography either in the magazines, or in quarto. Indeed, any man can have a place in the former, if he would only find his own likeness. There was not long since an immensely rich young fellow here, a sort of underbred Corinthian, who, by dint of spending his money foolishly, was admitted into the circles of fashion, where any one can obtain toleration at a certain price. Finding his notoriety a little on the wane, he made interest with the manager of one of the theatres to let him play Romeo. He was heartily laughed at in the first act, and hissed during the others. But he gained his point, and got his likeness and biography into one of the fashionable magazines, sacred to boxing-matches and hunting feats. Here ho

will descend to posterity with the champion Crib, the Black Prince, Molyneux, and other worthies, who batter themselves to bran for the amusement of that humane old rogue, John Bull.

It is amazing to see with what facility a great book is here compiled concerning a little man. The incidents of his life ; his good or evil actions ; his importance, or his want of importance, are of no sort of consequence. These biographers are like French cooks, or Spanish innkeepers, who can make an excellent dish out of a tom cat, or a cow's heel. If the little man had any great men for his cotemporaries, or was cotemporary with any great events ; if he was at Oxford, Cambridge, Eton, or Harrow, with any body of distinguished rank, or who afterwards distinguished himself, and dropped him a letter now and then ; or if he was a member of some half a score of learned societies, provincial or foreign ; either of these fortunate coincidences is sufficient for a quarto royal. If he was cotemporary with great men, a book can be made out of them ; if with great events, the author can pounce upon the history of the times ; if a member of learned societies, all the learned persons belonging to them may be made to contribute to the dignity of the hero ; but if he corresponded with illustrious men—the letters—the letters, my dear brother, are treasures of biography. If they were written in confidence, so much the better ; the little tittle tattle ; the free opinions ; domestic disclosures, and private scandal, are inestimable treasures, as furnishing irresistible attractions to the present literary taste.

This inordinate and sinful appetite for private scandal, and private letters, has a most pernicious influence, not only on the literature of the present day, but on the character of distinguished persons long since in their graves ; and, one would suppose,

beyond the reach of this unallowed gossiping curiosity. Happy was it for old Homer and the rest of the immortals of ancient times, that they were not in the habit of being followed by some poor literary parasite, ever sagging at their heels to catch at every indication of weakness or folly ; to record every hasty word, and to preserve for posterity the recollection of every sentiment and action they would wish to bury in oblivion. Fortunate were they, that the refined literary taste of their times offered no temptation for these spies, to take advantage of those loose hours, when genius, like Jove, puts off her divinity, and becomes a mortal, to enjoy the society of mortals, and bask in the smiles of beauty, love, and pleasure. Had such a being been permitted to associate familiarly with the illustrious bards and sages of antiquity, we should probably have been gratified with the valuable information, that Homer was a terrible fellow for midnight brawls ; that Anacreon was given to running up long scores at taverns, and Euripides, like Will Shakspeare, a great deer-stealer. Some such despicable parasite, or modern mercenary biographer, has lately laid violent hands upon some familiar letters of Pope to Martha Blount, which, it is evident, he never intended should be read by any person but herself. From these, and from several pitiful anecdotes, collected with most prying industry, this reverend editor has attempted to infer, that the friendship between Pope and Miss Blount, was a criminal attachment on his part at least. To what purpose this ? Supposing it true, will it add any important item to the sum of human knowledge ; will it give dignity to our nature, or weight to the moral precepts of the poet, to know, or even to suspect, that the beautiful birthday address to Martha Blount, beginning with,

"O! be thou blest with all that Heaven can send,
 "Long youth, long health, long pleasure, and a friend,"

was written to a woman for whom he cherished a criminal attachment, and whose ruin of course he must have meditated? But admitting these conclusions to be false, what a cruel outrage upon the memory of the dead, who have no means to vindicate themselves, and to whose names this imputation will for ever attach itself, since the biographer has taken care to incorporate it with those works of the poet, that will most likely be read by the latest posterity of Englishmen in every quarter of the globe. This is the most cruel and effectual of all calumnies. The falsehood would soon perish in the malignity or busy folly where it was engendered; but thus to make it a partaker and companion of the poet's immortality, is to make sure, that however it may be disbelieved, it cannot soon be forgotten.

This taste of the English public for bookish scandal, like a taste for it in conversation, indicates a want of a wholesome appetite for more innocent recreation, or more useful reading. If it should continue to be called literary taste to enjoy these polluted banquets, no one can doubt the ultimate consequences. No man's reputation will ever descend to posterity pure and undefiled. A character unstained by vice or immorality; a century of spotless fame, will be insufficient to protect the memory of a saint from the prying industry, the ingenious malignity, of some biographical libeller, who is sure of being rewarded by a discerning public, for relieving them from the insufferable weight of unqualified admiration. So long as this perverted literary taste continues, no man's ashes will be sacred, and no man's reputation be placed by time and the suffrage of the world beyond the

reach of inferences, drawn from private confidential letters and equivocal words, the motive and the precise meaning of which can never be ascertained. It has been hitherto supposed that a great man, and especially a great writer, could only be properly estimated after death. The reason is, that the envy of cotemporaries, the spirit of rivalry, and all those temporary drawbacks, that cling to the cloak of genius or merit, pass away. His enemies die; his rivals are no more; his little foibles, faults, and blemishes, are no longer remembered, and he remains to be judged, as all men should be judged, by his works alone—those works, which he deliberately committed to the inquest of posterity. But if private letters and private opinions are to be published, when the author of them is no longer alive to explain, apologise, or make atonement—if a man's contempt for his rivals and cotemporaries; his dislike to this person, his antipathy to that, are all to be placed on record, is it not certain that it will perpetuate animosities, and hand down to posterity the materials of heart-burnings and contention? Hereditary antipathies will thus be perpetuated, and the posterity of the dead arrayed against each other like those of our wild Indians, who wage eternal wars to revenge the wrongs of their fathers. The reverend editor of this scandalous edition of Pope's works, has not contented himself with this attack upon his moral character, but has coupled it with a denial of his claim to the character of a poet! This has given rise to one of the most ridiculous controversies in the world, of which I shall probably hereafter take notice.

Another characteristic feature of the present school of English literature is, the incredible appetite for black letter books, and old trash of every sort, which derives its sole value from its scarcity,

More than one nobleman here owe all the eclat they enjoy, independently of their rank and fortune, to their munificence in patronising old authors and printers, who have been dead for centuries. The worse a book is printed, and the more ridiculously quaint its title, the more they will give for the treasure. If they meet with a book, for instance, entitled and called "The dolefulle Tragedye and delectable pleasaunte and merrie Comedy of Goodye Twooe Shooes," or some such trumpery, printed with wooden blocks, they will give a couple of hundred guineas for it, provided it be the only copy in the world. But if there should chance to be another extant, its value is diminished a hundred fold. I happened, not long ago, to be present at the sale of the duke of Roxburgh's library, where Locke, Newton, Milton, Shakspeare, and others, went off for little or nothing, while a copy of "Most righte, rare, and truly dyvertynge Ballads," such as the beggars were wont to sing of yore about Tower Hill, was purchased by a Mæcenas for a few hundred guineas, and a most valuable series of old play-bills brought still more. I must not omit to mention, that the fortunate purchasers not only had the pleasure of gaining the valuable acquisitions, but also got complimented in all the periodicals and diurnals, for their munificence in the encouragement of literature.

At this sale there was a most laughable contest between his grace of *****, and the right honourable earl *****, for no less a treasure than a black letter copy of the history of the Three Wise Men of Gotham, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, in his worst manner. These noblemen were just beginning to nibble at the treasure, and the auctioneer, as well as the heirs of his grace of Roxburgh, were in expectation of a great wind-

fall, when Sir *****, a famous physician, who is a sort of black letter oracle, observed, with an appearance of great indifference; that he had seen a copy at Lackington's, and another at a stall in Grub-street. The name of Grub-street was a death-blow to the Three Wise Men, who were forthwith knocked down to some obscure person for little more than twenty times their real value. Since then it has been ascertained that neither Lackington nor Grub-street can boast a copy, and it is shrewdly suspected Sir ***** raised the report with a view of purchasing the book himself, had he not been called off at the moment to attend the lap-dog of lady D*****.

Another of the more prominent features of English literature is the vast quantity of foolish, canting novels, and still more foolish, canting tales, published here every day. There are, I should imagine, at least a thousand men, women, and children, who will give you each a picture of life and manners, whose knowledge of the world hardly equals that of a king or a Chickasaw. These generally lay the scene at Brighton, Bath, or London, where they introduce an extravagant duchess, who pawns her jewels, and never pays her debts; a duke, who is half fool and half profligate; two or three of their marriageable daughters, who go such lengths in captivating rich boohy husbands as would make one of our modest females shrink into the earth; half a dozen Corinthians, and men of pleasure and intrigue, together with one sentimental, religious young man, and one ditto married woman, who generally end with seduction and adultery, and die of broken hearts, for the purpose of exciting the pity, when they should call forth the indignation of a well regulated mind and taste. These characters and incidents, it is true, are sufficiently natural here, to be almost common-place;

yet the manner in which the incidents occur, and the concatenation of circumstances by which the catastrophe is brought about, are either so ridiculously absurd, or so improbably rare, that the book is no more like life, than if it were written by a person who had lived all his days on a desert island. Still these books find purchasers, especially among those who know nothing about high life, and most religiously believe, that every mad poet introduced is lord Byron, and every character drawn from some distinguished individual in the beau monde. With the exception of Miss Edgeworth, I know of not one writer of novels now before the public, who has the lowest pretensions to the character of a tolerable delineator of life and manners, as they appear in this country. You will, I suppose, think I have forgotten the "mighty unknown." I assure you I have not, for in the next letter I write, I mean to give you the opinion of certain critics here, who, though they do not write for the reviews, have more influence eventually in settling the character of an author, than the reviewers themselves. These occasionally contrast Miss Edgeworth and the great Incognitus, and I shall merely sum up their opinions.

To conclude this long letter: Science is certainly in a high state of perfection in this country, although a little degraded by too great a rage for new theories, and a habit of troubling the world with trifling experiments and frivolous discoveries. But for literature—the belles lettres—were I to venture a general opinion, founded not only upon my own conclusions, but on the decisions of others of far higher authority, I should say that they are degenerating by swift gradations into the excesses of Gothic barbarity. The only two branches of literature that really flourish here at present, are the art of running down, and puffing up a book, as

practised by the Reviewers. These self-elected judges know no medium between the most extravagant, unqualified praises, and the most bitter denunciations. They appear to despise the vulgar labour of discrimination, as well as the vulgar qualification of impartiality; and the reviewing of a book is now little else than the abuse or the praises of the author. Under their fostering care and authoritative example, all the courtesy of literature, and all the chivalry of authors, have disappeared. Personal attacks; bitter and merciless abuse; imputations of vicious habits, impiety, hypocrisy, and heaven knows what, are the characteristics of literary quarrels, and literary rivalry. Critics are little else than hungry lions, kept in reserve to roar down and devour obnoxious authors; while the authors themselves, not content with being subjected to the discipline of the Reviews, occasionally turn to and tear each other's characters to pieces, like two literary ruffians hired to make sport for the fashionable mob.

If you have chanced to see the elegant satire, exhibited in a contest now raging between Lord Byron and the laureat, you will have some idea of the manner in which these wars are conducted by the higher powers. The laureat calls his lordship a writer of "satanic poetry;" a disciple of impiety; an enemy to social order, social duties, and social happiness. His lordship retorts by calling the laureat an apostate, a hypocrite, a renegade; and, for want of a good jest of his own, quotes, for the third or fourth time, a saying of professor Porson, that "Joan of Arc, and Mr. Southey's other epics, would be read when Homer and Milton were forgotten—and not till then." Honest Bob retorts, by charging his lordship with plagiarism, in calling Venice the "Rome of the Ocean," because Lady Morgan had first used it in her work on Italy.

His lordship denies having seen that work until after he had sent his *Tragedy of Foscari* to Mr. Murray, and, of course, he could not have stolen the phrase from her. Now you will perhaps be somewhat surprised, when I tell you, that Venice has been complimented with the aforesaid title at least fifty times in my hearing by Italians, years before either *Foscari*, or Lady Morgan's book was thought of. It is almost a common phrase, like "the mistress of the world," applied to old Rome. The honour of introducing it to the English public is all that either of them can claim. The laureat finally threatens his lordship with terrible exposures; and his lordship accuses him and Coleridge of marrying two sister milliners of Bath. The war is not yet finished, and will probably lead to still more unworthy and outrageous invectives. You will probably stare at these exhibitions of literary courtesy; but where is the wonder, when the very reviews, that aspire to direct the public taste, and correct the public morals, set the example of this disgusting personality? The gross and vulgar character of English literature of the present day is therefore perfectly natural, considering their great models of taste; and all I wonder at is, the preposterous vanity of these people in fancying themselves polite and refined.

The play of *Marino Faliero* was some months since laid violent hands on by Mr. Elliston, the manager, who brought it out at his theatre, contrary to his lordship's express desire. A curious question arose in consequence of this new species of land-pirating, as to the right of the manager of a theatre to a play already published, and paid for by the booksellers. The matter is yet, I believe, before the Lord Chancellor, who, I imagine, will decide at last in favour of the manager, who is a

very loyal man, whereas Lord Byron is reckoned somewhat of a radical. This circumstance is generally decisive at present in an English court of equity. Whatever the law may be, I cannot help thinking that courtesy and propriety both forbid such an interference with the wishes of an author, in regard to the disposal of his works. If a tragedy, for instance, be expressly written for the closet, it seems rather hard, that the reputation of the writer should be subjected to an ordeal which he not only never contemplated, but against which he expressly protests. Mr. Elliston, the manager, is universally esteemed as a gentleman of good principles, and nice sense of honour; but, it appears to me, he has not exemplified either on this occasion.

I was present at the performance. The play, to be sure, was miserably cut up, first by the pruning knife, second by the performers, who played as if they had been bribed by Mr. Southey to ruin his lordship's reputation. The first lopped away half its beauties; the latter spoiled all those that remained. Mr. W*****, one of Kean's pupils, played the duke, and exhibited one of the most testy, fidgetty, fretful, fiery, frisking, and active elderly persons I ever remember to have seen. It is indeed wonderful, what labour one of these harlequin tragedians will go through in the course of a single play. They are never quiet for an instant, except when dead; and to kill them is a pretty undertaking, seeing they have nine lives, at least. When not actually sustaining a part in the dialogue, they are sure to be puffing, swelling, panting, slapping their foreheads, beating their breasts, or rummaging about their shirt collar; and when they do not tear a passion to rags, make amends by tearing their hair or their linen. In short, their acting partakes of that unnatural, in-

flated extravagance, which is now the characteristic of almost every thing fashionable here, in literature or the arts, and which invariably, I think, marks the decline of both. If Lord Byron had no other objection, I think he would have been perfectly right in trying to keep his tragedy out of the hands of such tempestuous villains.

The play did not succeed well, as might have been expected, under all these disadvantages, so that I believe there is little danger that Mr. Elliston will commit a similar piracy upon any future drama of his Lordship. I was sorry for it, as I think it far superior to any of those harem-scarem fragments, or farragos, published by Lord Byron as Poems ; and I wished to see him encouraged in the new path of common sense and common decency. To me it seems to exhibit all his power of conception, and expression of passion, directed with vastly more propriety and discretion, and to more unexceptionable ends, than usual. There is nothing of the cant of misanthropy, with which his Lordship has almost surfeited my appetite ; nor any allusion to his own real or affected sufferings and disappointments, for which I have been sorry any time for twelve years past, but cannot be sorry much longer, I give him fair warning. I would advise his Lordship to continue in the play-writing line, where he cannot well introduce himself and his inscrutable, inexpressible, and inexplicable wrongs, except at second hand. There is in *Marino Faliero*, if I be not mistaken, more of intellect—of the power of connexion and arrangement—more judgment and art in producing the catastrophe, than in any former production. In short, there is a reason for every thing the characters do, which is more, I believe, than his Lordship can say of his own actions, or those of a good portion of his heroes and heroines. It has given me a

much higher opinion of the author's genius than I had before. It was not, however, sufficiently unnatural for the taste of John Bull; it wanted more daggers, arsenic, and murder; the heroine neither ran mad with grief, nor ran away from an aged affectionate husband; and, above all, there was but one execution in the whole piece, and that not visible. Now the mob, who gave money to see this, could have seen half a dozen at Tyburn for nothing, almost every day of the week except Sunday, which is appropriated to drinking, instead of hanging.

Besides these objections on the part of the mob, there were others of vast weight urged on the part of the reviewers. They pronounced it an outrage upon nature and probability, for a man of high spirit, high station, and a high sense of honour, to feel so acutely an insult, first to the wife of his bosom, and next to himself; an imputation upon the chastity of her he cherished with the affection of a father and the tenderness of a husband, followed up by a virtual refusal on the part of the senate of Venice to resent or punish the wrong: this is the first objection. The second is, that it was highly improbable, even if the Doge had really felt this conduct so acutely, that he would attempt to revenge it by putting himself in the power of a company of vulgar conspirators, by intriguing with them to overturn the state. Now, humbly and lowly bowing to the majesty of these legitimate lords of literature and literary men, I would suggest, that in the whole circle of the human passions, I know of none which have, in the course of time, furnished more powerful motives of action, or given rise to greater excesses of every kind, than wounded honour, and disappointed revenge. By both of these was Marino Faliero stimulated, in consequence first of the

couplet of Stenó, and next by the slight punishment awarded the outrage by the senate.

With respect to the second great objection, that of seeking to overturn the state to revenge himself, and for this purpose holding nightly meetings with the leaders of the commoners, I really do not see the least ground to charge his Lordship with a departure from probability. Nothing is more common in life, than to see the indignation of the plaintiff turned from the defendant, who gave the first offence, to the judges, who refused to punish the offender. And certainly nothing is more common in history, ancient and modern, than for the ambitious and revengeful leaders of a revolution to league with a discontented populace, for the purpose of overturning an obnoxious power. The case before us is of this very kind; and the fact that the plot of this play is strictly historical, one would suppose, might have repressed all doubts as to nature and probability. But the honest truth of the matter is this: the worshipful judges, in the English court of criticism, have of late years been so accustomed to decide in favour of mere caricatures and counterfeits, that whenever poor nature comes before them, they know not what to make of her, and treat the dame as the connoisseurs did the painter's own face, which they pronounced a most villanous likeness. Besides, they begin to discover, by the lights of public opinion, that they have been rather too indiscriminate in praising his Lordship's faults, and, as usual, take the first opportunity of retrieving the blunder, by detracting from his beauties.

Lord Byron has just now published the *Mystery of Cain*. This will afford a fine opening for the Laureat, and is, I think, a fair off-set to Mr. Southey's "*Judgment*," which is very orthodox, and

very dull; whereas Cain is very dull and very heterodox. You will see it, of course, as they would republish, I presume, any thing of his Lordship's on our side of the water, short of a ****
 *****. Lord Byron assures his readers, that it is not an imitation of the Death of Abel, or Paradise Lost, neither of which he has read since he was a boy. I believe it; and were it permitted so humble a person as myself to whisper one moment in his ear, I would advise his Lordship to refresh his memory a little with the simple, sterling, and majestic beauties of the great master of simplicity and sublimity. It is better to be a good imitator of Milton than an original Lord Byron. A few more mysteries of this kind will probably bring his Lordship to his proper level, which is probably somewhere about mid way between Milton and Southey, (a little nearer to *Bob*) the two extremes of independent, republican genius, and servile, loyal inanity.

LETTER XXVIII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

I NEED not tell you, that with respect to literature, in this and every other country, the voice of fashion, and fashionable critics, is very different from the voice of taste. The first is loud, but soon dies away; the other, though but a whisper in comparison, endures for ages, and is ratified by the latest posterity. Though quiet and slow in its progress, it always prevails in the end with the force of truth, and the certainty of fate. The authority of mere partisan, or professional critics, is temporary; that of taste eternal.

Hence it is, that so many literary works, that through the influence of reviews, or the caprices of fashion, maintain a vast popularity for a season or two, are entirely forgotten when the temporary impulse subsides, and give place to others equally short-lived. Nothing, indeed, can be more fleeting than the shadow of popularity enjoyed by those who sail along with the gale of fashion, aided by the labouring oar of professional criticism. Within my short, and not very merry life, I have already seen at least half a score of generations and ages of fashion pass away, leaving scarcely a wreck behind, save on the shelves of the booksellers, where the unsold editions attest the saga-

city of the critics, who confidently pronounced that these works were to last for ever. The mania for German plays, and German horrors, which once raged with great fury, was cured by the Antijacobin, aided by a gleam of returning taste. The Della Cruscan school was routed by our friend Gifford in the Baviad; and Sir John Carr, whose travels were the staff of life to the fashionable epicures, was shot dead by an arrow from the quiver of George Canning, "and word spake never more."

Next came the fashionable age of border poetry, which endured a considerable time, aided by the indefatigable activity of Walter Scott, and the influence of the Edinburgh Reviewers, with whom Mr. Scott was at that time on better terms than now. But this also passed away before the present tide of Italian, Grecian, and Turkish strains of my Lord Byron, and his tuneful rabble of imitators. Even his lordship's heroics begin to pall, and he has been fain to appeal to the fashionable taste, in a work in which he has sunk his genius to the dead level of doggerel and debauchery combined.

One of the most striking characteristics of the present school of poets here, is the almost supernatural facility displayed in the composition of their works. Nearly the last spark of poor Sheridan's wit fell upon one of these fruitful rhymers. Somebody was lamenting that W***** S**** did not take more pains with his writings. Sheridan replied, "I can't agree with you—I think he always takes more pains than they are worth." But I will let you into the true secret of these frequent appeals of the fashionable bards. They are so well acquainted with the short memories of the persons constituting the *beau monde*, and their extreme aptitude to forget their old friends in the admiration of new favourites, that they know full well

the only way to escape oblivion is to make their appearance before them, and appeal to their patronage at least once a year. They hold this patronage of the fashionable world, by a tenure somewhat analogous to those of some of the old occupants of manors, which turned on presenting to the king, every year, either something uncommonly worthless, or performing some unaccountably ridiculous caper. One Robert Testard, I remember, held lands on condition of introducing a certain number of women of ill fame at court, pretty much as Lord Byron holds his favour with the sovereign *beau monde*, by presenting it, at stated intervals, with a few specimens of worthless heroes and heroines. Another person, whose name I cannot recollect, held by the tenure of presenting a fat goose to the king on Michaelmas day, in like manner as the laureat holds his hundred pounds and butt of sack, on condition of presenting a fat ode every year on his majesty's birth-day. Sir Walter Scott renews his tenure by a new species of knight's service—by producing two books a year; like the honest Scot, who held a fishery by presenting a couple of salt herrings to his landlord, one on St. Andrew's, the other on New-Year's day.

It is in a great degree owing to this species of literary tenure, and the consequent necessity of making an annual offering, that the present mighty masters of the British lyre are so industrious in their devotions to the Muse. They sacrifice their lasting reputation, or at least the chance of attaining to it, at the shrine of a sickly love of novelty on one hand, and a sickly appetite for periodical fame, that can only be satisfied in quaffing draughts of adulation, perpetually renewed, each one more highly spiced than its predecessor. They bring their offspring into the world unformed, and don't

give themselves time to lick them into even the proportions of a young bear, before they are again in the straw with a new monster.

“Sadly condemn’d, (the poet’s common curse,)
Still to be writing, and still writing worse ;
And when all spent, their little scanty store
Of inspiration, steal or borrow more ;
Poach in old bards, whose manly wit and rhymes
Are quite forgotten in these polished times,
And like lean doctors, who can’t gain a meal
By killing flesh, through midnight shadows steal
To sepulchres, defraud the very stones,
Dig up the body, and then sell the bones.”

One of the greatest of the reviewers here, has expressed his surprise at the wonderful facility of the poets of the present day in Great Britain, which he seems inclined to ascribe to a superabundance of poetical genius. You have read most of their poems, and must judge for yourself, whether it be not rather owing to an almost total neglect of every thing but the mere mechanical part of poetry, rhyming. The habit of reading poetry is now so general, that the ear of almost every well educated person is familiarly accustomed to the jingling of verse ; and so far as mere versification goes, I believe there never were so many poets, by one half, in this country, as at this time. I have no other pretensions to be a critic, than being familiar with the works of standard poets ; but I think I may venture to say, that as all is not gold that glitters, so all is not poetry that jingles. The great plenty of poets here is no better proof of the high state of poetry, than the great plenty of grain is of the prosperity of the nation. With the exception of one or two, it appears to me, that the whole school of English poets of the present day, are born with the seeds of a constitutional decay. Not one of them will probably ever produce a standard work,

or take rank hereafter with the masters of the lyre who have gone before them. Posterity always judges for itself in these matters. It cannot be influenced by the fleeting caprices of a preceding age ; and when it comes to pass judgment on the acts or the productions of its forefathers, will pay little attention to the decisions of fashionable people, whose dress and manners will have become objects of ridicule ; or to the honours bestowed by a king, whose memory will perhaps be held in scorn.

The best of these will not allow themselves leisure to plan and mature their works. They send them forth, not to depend for success upon their own intrinsic merit, but upon the popularity of a name, aided by occasional flashy passages, that for a moment dazzle or confound, and are strung together by a deal of prosaic dulness, or connected by a row of brilliant stars. It is impossible, on reflection, not to see that when the influence of novelty and fashion subsides, these poets, in spite of their occasional beauties, must necessarily fall into comparative insignificance before those, who have stood the test of varying modes, manners, opinions, and fashions, and triumphed over the changes that have proved fatal to those minor spirits, who rose and set in one and the same age. The former not only far excel the latter in their greatest efforts, and in their happiest moments ; but, in addition to this superiority over their best claims, are still more elevated above them in the vigour, steadiness, and grace of their flight ; in the purity of their taste ; in the correctness of their judgment, and in the perfection and richness of their invention. Nearly all the advantages, possessed by the majority of the living British poets, are derived from their novelty. To the readers of the

present generation, Walter Scott and Lord Byron come with all the interest of that newness, of which every perusal will rob them, as it has robbed the earlier bards. But in proportion as the attention of the readers of poetry is drawn from Goldsmith, Pope, Milton, Thomson, and others, to Scott and Byron, the former will acquire a new gloss of novelty, while the latter will lose it entirely. To a succeeding generation all will be equally new; the works of the elder poets will come before them with all the charm of novelty; and thus these living poets will lose the only advantage they possess, that of being read by those to whom they are new, and the others old. We see the truth of this exemplified more and more every day, in the indifference of a large portion of readers to the early works of some of the most fashionable of the living bards, simply because they are no longer new; in the cheapness with which they are bought at stalls and auctions; and in the entire neglect of those who have already purchased to preserve them. They possess, in fact, no latent beauties: their charms are all displayed in open glare; obtruding themselves to the first glance, and only palling upon the second, rather than presenting new ones that we had before overlooked. The story once known, and curiosity satisfied, there remain no modest, unobtrusive charms to allure the attention, or fire the regards of those, who find, in every work of real excellence, new treasures at every repeated perusal, that make ample amends for the absence of suspense, or the diminution of novelty.

Of the poets of the present day, Lord Byron is the principal favourite of the *bon ton*. Since the time of Charles the Second, it has been a rare thing to see a titled bard; and it is probable, I imagine, that admiration of his Lordship's genius

has mingled with that deference for rank, which is the distinguishing characteristic of a people who are not equal in the eye of the law, or the estimation of each other. Still, though his title has undoubtedly aided the progress of his fame, he is, I think, upon the whole, a poet considerably above mediocrity—a poet among Lords, if not a Lord among poets. He sometimes thinks and feels deeply, and occasionally expresses himself with a vehemence of passion, that gives to ordinary conceptions the appearance of something extraordinary. His thoughts, if not often fine, are expressed, in many instances, with a vigorous energy, that causes them to be mistaken for fine thoughts; and he who can deceive his readers into an opinion of his excellence, is certainly not without merit.

To me, however, it appears, that his Lordship's most unequivocal claim to the possession of genius rests upon the great characteristic of independence of mind. I cannot help admiring him for having turned upon those worms, the critics, even when a boy, and knocking their pates together across the Tweed. He might have written equal to Pope or Goldsmith, without having received a tithe of the praises since lavished upon him, had it not been for this exemplary drubbing, which, however, was more distinguished for severity than wit. It frightened these heroes, however, and that was sufficient. There is nothing, in truth, more easily quelled, either in war or literature, than a blustering, saucy bully.

Another characteristic of this independence of mind, so often allied to genius, is evinced in the hardihood with which Lord Byron persists in keeping aloof from that canting squeamishness of verbal nicety, with which hypocrisy is now wont to shroud her deeds of darkness, and into which most of the living writers of this country have been

drilled by the hope of being applauded in the Quarterly Review; or, it may be, lured by the edifying example of the king and his ministers. Literature, indeed, seems to have followed the fashion of the times, and turned hypocrite. A little surplice of orthodoxy is now the best cloak for dulness; and a writer, who despairs of delighting by the powers of his genius, is sure of praise and rewards, by joining in the universal chorus of cant, which echoes through this quarter of the globe, and gathers in proportion to the increase of profligacy and crime. One might exclaim, in the words of an old author, who wrote in the time of Charles the Second, a period in many respects resembling the present era of-England :

“ O! holy reformation! how art thou fallen down from the upper bodies of the church, to the skirts of the city. Honesty is stripped out of his true substance, into *verbal nicety*. Common sinners startle at common terms; and they that by whole mountains swallow down the deeds of darkness, a poor mote of a familiar word makes turn up the whites o’ the eye.”

Disgusted with this overwhelming *cant*, Lord Byron has occasionally, beyond doubt, deviated into the other extreme, not so much in words or detached ideas, as in the general tendency of his poetry. He has gone over to the opposite extreme of licentiousness, and in so doing, given to the world an unfavourable impression of his morals. I have met, but am not acquainted with him. He seems, I am told, gratified with the popularity of his works in the new world. Indeed, the greatest of them, with all their offensive airs of English pride, look upon the admiration of the increasing millions beyond the ocean as one of their proudest trophies. His Lordship seems rather a sensitive

sort of being, with all his *cant* of misanthropy. He perhaps flatters himself with being of the kind whose pride is self-supported, and independent of every thing but the consciousness of genius and worth. But I doubt whether he be one of this lofty breed. If any such do, or ever did exist, they are not to be found among the poets, unless they be unsuccessful poets. Had he possessed this inward godhead, he would not have condescended to answer the Edinburgh Reviewers. As it was, he felt like a man, and avenged himself like a man.

Lord Byron is suspected of being somewhat of a radical, although I believe one of the most confirmed aristocrats in existence. To be sure, he rails at the king and the ministers; but whether this proceeds from spleen, or disappointment, in not being sent minister to Constantinople, instead of a noble rival bard, is more than I know. We must be careful how we confound the opponents of the ministry with the friends of reform. No two things can be more different. The first only want the places; the others want the places abolished, that the people may be freed from a portion of their burthens. On the whole, so far as I can learn, his Lordship is neither a prodigy nor a monster. If he be stained with any dark vices, it is more than I know; if he be a man of intrigue, it is no more than might be expected from the indiscreet, not to say, indelicate, advances of single and married, titled and untitled, dames. I have been actually scandalized at the immodest forwardness of some of these virgin adorers of his genius. But I have heard of no instances of his taking advantage of these advances; and believe that the nearest he has come to an elopement was running away from his own wife.

His Lordship has lately given most crying and mortal offence to that bully of orthodoxy, the Quarterly Review man, by expressing a vast contempt both for the politics and poetry of the Laureat, who is said to be a fellow-labourer in the vineyard of criticism with Mr. Gifford. For this offence, backed by the open expression of his disaffection towards his majesty and his ministers, the great reviewer hath lately begun to show his teeth, and will probably bark at his Lordship soon, although he is partly under the patronage of Mr. Murray, the publisher of the Review. He will be denounced soon. Not for his politics—O no! the Quarterly is too wary for that—for his lack of religion; his heterodoxy to the church; not his disaffection to the state. The Quarterly always attacks under cover of this mask, behind which he can safely indulge in envy, malice, calumny, and all uncharitableness. Though all the world knows perfectly well it is his Lordship's politics, and want of respect for the poetry of the Laureat that offends the critic; yet such is the excitement of party-spirit here, that it influences almost every reader, and forms the ground-work of his literary taste. The Quarterly Review is the great watch-dog at the door of the palace, giving notice of the approach of all suspicious persons by a growl, and barking at the enemy whenever he appears. It is the censor of the press; and though it cannot prevent an obnoxious book from being published, it strives hard to prevent its being read, by denouncing it to all those whose principles are of so delicate a nature that they cannot resist even the shock of false reasoning. Hence, though a notorious party journal, pensioned and paid by the government, and devoid even of the grace to affect impartiality, it still continues to be the oracle of all those in similar circumstances;

to wit, almost all the higher dignitaries of the church ; nearly all the nobility ; all those who are both loyal and orthodox by virtue of pension and place—in short, all those worthy people, who are fully convinced by the irrefragable invectives of the Quarterly Review, that religion and loyalty are inseparable. All these are fully satisfied that Mr. William Gifford, clerk of the honourable band of gentlemen pensioners, and editor of the said journal, is an exceedingly pious man, because he flies at poor Lady Morgan like an enraged tom-cat, and foams at the mouth whenever a Frenchman is mentioned ; it being his maxim, that all the precepts of the Christian religion may be lawfully violated in support of the king and the church. You would naturally suppose, that some of the articles on the United States, in this journal, were the productions of one of the highest garrets of Grub-street, where some hungry fanatic had retired to vent his accumulated spleen, and earn a meal by libelling his fellow-creatures. No such thing. They are some of them the production of Mr. *****, of the admiralty, who occasionally dines with the king at Brighton ; of Mr. Gifford, who, however, they say, writes but little now ; of Mr. D'Israeli, who is said to be the bold, generous, and redoubtable reviewer of Lady Morgan ; and of others, who would faint at the very horrid idea of Grub-street and a garret. Lord Byron's popularity will probably shake a little under the anticipated attacks of this review, notwithstanding its venal character. The most refined class of readers here, are much more afraid of a naughty book than of a naughty action ; and it is growing to be rather the fashion, to make amends for private vices by public professions.

Having, in a preceding letter, taken occasion to allude to the controversy concerning the poetical

genius of one Alexander Pope, who, I believe, you have heard of, and mentioned Lord Byron's letter relating to that subject, I will take this opportunity to give you some particulars of that notable foolery. It seems hardly entitled to any other name, since the reputation of Pope is just as well established by a century of admiration, as that of any name in English poetry. It is equally beyond the reach of Mr. Bowles' criticism, and Lord Byron's defence. The origin of this mighty war of words is as follows.

It seems the Rev. Mr. Bowles, a clergyman, and a writer of marvellously indifferent sonnets, some five or six years ago was employed by a bookseller to superintend a new edition of Pope's works. In the performance of this task, and, as it were, administering upon the treasures he had left behind him, Mr. Bowles found a mare's nest. He not only discovered that Pope was no poet, but that his moral character was stained with a criminal attachment to Martha Blount, joined to a habit of intemperate drinking. If such charges had been brought against one of our departed worthies, we should never have heard the last of it from the Messieurs of the Quarterly. It would most likely have superseded their favourite topics of declamation, the slave trade and republican degeneracy. But I scorn to make advantage of the malignant researches of Mr. Bowles, which seem to have been prosecuted in the true spirit of unsuccessful rivalry. Mr. Bowles ought to have known, however, that he could no more bring Pope down to the level of Mr. Bowles, than he could raise Mr. Bowles to the level of Pope.

The discovery that Pope was no poet, was made by applying to his poetry the touchstone of certain "invariable principles," successfully developed, I presume, in Mr. Bowles' sonnets. He hastened

to communicate it to the public, that it might no longer labour under this dangerous delusion of fancying Alexander Pope a poet. In this most unpoetical heresy, Mr. Bowles, the sonneteer, was joined by Mr. Southey, the Sapphic, reinforced by the genius of bitter and malignant dulness, in the person of his *locum tenens*, the clerk of the honourable band of gentlemen pensioners. Poor Pope! "Could the d—l pick thee out three such enemies?" The laureat had been equally successful with Mr. Bowles, in applying the "invariable principles" of dulness and absurdity to his poetry, and it was natural that they should join their forces to expel this interloper upon the fields of Parnassus, this "squatter" on the territory of Messrs. Bowles and Southey.

On the other hand, Lord Byron and Mr. Thomas Campbell have been drawn into the contest, and both insist upon it that Pope is a poet. And they set about proving it, so far as I can understand their arguments, the one by affirming that he is so, according to the "invariable principles" aforesaid; the other by maintaining there is no such thing as an invariable principle of poetry, any more than there is an invariable fiddlestick in music. Connected with this strange controversy is a question, equally curious, respecting the application of these invariable characteristics to a ship: Whether a ship be in itself a sublime object; or whether she must be launched, and be associated with the ocean, the winds, and the sublime of nature, to become an integral portion of sublimity. In short, my dear brother, you may take my word for it, there never was any thing equal to this chopping of logic, since the memorable controversy concerning "the real being of actual being." They had better postpone the decision, till a jury of Mr. Pope's peers can be found, to try him by the invariable

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principles of Mr. Bowles. I demur to the competency of the present court. King Charles is called a martyr, because his judges are said not to have been legally qualified; and Pope will assuredly be equally entitled to canonization, should he be condemned by Messrs. Bowles and Southey, aided by the Jack Ketch of authors, the clerk of the most honourable band of gentlemen pensioners. One thing, however, is pretty certain: which ever way these incredible judges decide, the readers of poetry will think of Mr. Pope exactly as they did before, and read him as much as ever. Neither Lord Byron nor Thomas Campbell will probably be able to raise his reputation higher than it was; and Messrs. Bowles and Southey, not forgetting the clerk of the honourable band of pensioners, will probably be remembered longer by their attack upon Pope's poetry, than by their own. The whole controversy is one of those excrescences which grow out of an unwholesome state of literature, and originated probably in that overweening self-sufficiency, which is so apt to make men believe their opinions of more consequence than they really are.

But to reverse Pope's line, "there are who judge still worse than they can write," I should say, there are here, at present, plenty who write still worse than they judge. In truth, it is the opinion of the best judges here, that poetry is on her last legs in merry Old England, as she was once called. The present school of poetry is a foreign school, compounded of German horrors and Italian effeminacy. Lord Byron, who, had he been content to write in the spirit of a true-born Englishman, might possibly have added a few leaves to the wreath of immortality, has, in my poor opinion, imported into this country what appears to me the lowest species of poetry—a mere

jargon of unconnected rhapsodies and apostrophies, which rise out of the dead level of a vast expanse of tame prosaic matter, with an effort apparently herculean. These are presented in all the imposing dignity of a sublime, abstracted philosophy, without possessing any one of its attributes, or developing one of its nobler principles. In his just and well-founded contempt for the overwhelming *cant* that now characterizes almost every species of English literature, he falls, as I before observed, into the opposite error, and opposes the cant of religion and philanthropy, with that of misanthropy and skepticism. In avoiding that fashionable hypocrisy which glosses over vice with the garnish of a simulated piety, he has, perhaps, unwarily, not only made himself appear worse than he really is, but also, in his solicitude to oppose the fanaticism of the age, weakened the force of his authority and example, by bringing his own faith and morality into question.

So also, in attempting to avoid the beaten path of poetry, he has, I imagine, deviated into a mode of writing, of which the novelty is by no means equal to its other defects. Indeed, his lordship seems to be one of those who cannot deviate without losing their way, and whose fate it is to be ever on one side or the other of the golden mean. In *Childe Harold*, his lordship was all abstraction and rhapsody. There are no incidents in the apparently unpurposed wanderings of the lost *Childe*; and the chain of reflection seems only kept up by the progress of the horses, or the number of knots the ship sails by the hour. And yet, though the *Childe* deals altogether in abstract thoughts, he appears to have no powers of abstraction or fancy, but what entirely depend on visible objects. The sight of the Mediterranean appears necessary to raise the idea of an ocean or a storm;

the sight of a field of battle is essential to awaken his genius to a rhapsody on that subject; he must be in Rome, to be able properly to apostrophise the queen of the land; and in Venice, to do poetic justice to the queen of the sea. His fancy seems incapable of any self-supported flight, and her excursions are bounded entirely by his powers of locomotion. In short, the Childe seems equally incapable of imagining himself where he is not, or of forgetting where he is.

In the *Giaour*, the *Corsair*, and other poems of the like cast, his lordship, on the contrary, has nothing but action. The causes which produce, and the incidents by which the action is linked together in its parts, are either supplied by the substitution of certain rows of stars; or so succinctly alluded to, as to create not a little of the charm of obscurity, of which the excellent critic of the *London Literary Gazette* thinks so highly. Tired, it would seem, of rhapsodizing in *Childe Harold*, his lordship bursts forth, as it were, with a mighty effort, and with a hair-brained fury dashes into the thickest of the adventure, with almost as little reason or discretion as the knight of *La Mancha*. The restraints of probability, and the barriers of propriety, are equally despised; and, before we know it, there is a seduction, a murder, a rape, and what not, all brought about in the twinkling of an eye, and before one can say *Jack Robinson*. I doubt there is some little mistake in confounding that senseless fury, which despises all obstacles in its course, with that power and force of genius, which removes or overleaps them. The best rider is not he that, failing in the leap, breaks down the fence, but he who clears it at a bound. So with the poet, whose prime excellence it is to overcome the difficulties of his task, not by brutal force, but by a graceful exertion of activity and

skill. The connecting parts of every narrative are always the most dull to the reader ; they are therefore the most difficult to the author, and consequently his principal excellence is not in omitting them altogether, but in so managing them, as neither to tire the patience of the reader with their dulness and prolixity, nor to disgust him with their clumsy improbability.

There is no great effort of genius in giving fancy the rein, and goading her into the regions of impossibility, out of the sphere of those awkward restraints, which limit effects to their natural causes, and human actions to human powers. This is but letting the wild horse or mad bull loose among the vulgar crowd. But to restrain their mad gambols afterwards, is the test of strength, skill, and genius. It is easy to make the wild Indian drunk ; but to quell the horrible and impetuous vigour of his desires or his vengeance, is the task of the superior mind. Nothing is more common, I imagine, and at the same time more erroneous, than to mistake the dulness which requires the spur, for the genius that demands the curb and the rein. The apathy, that may perhaps be goaded into madness, is the opposite of the quick and fiery spirit, that is only kept from soaring too high by the steady reins of taste and judgment.

For these reasons, it has always been considered by the best critics, that to let loose monsters, without the will or the power to restrain them within the limits of what may be called monstrous propriety, to which such personages have ever been confined, is not the province of civilized christian-poetry, any more than uncaging the lions, or setting free the galley slaves, was a proof of genuine-rational chivalry. Unbridled lust and unrestrained revenge are powerful agents, but they are, apt to disgust, if not at first sight, at least by frequent ex-

hibition. To make them the principal agents in almost half a dozen poems, as lord Byron has done, is to excite a strong suspicion, that the range of his mind is rather confined, and that his imagination is composed of no great variety of tints. I have heard it observed here, that there was no little of poetical art in publishing *Don Juan* by piecemeal, one canto at a time. Those who have read the first cantos would be led to a perusal of the second, not so much by curiosity, as in the rational hope of seeing the hero hanged, or some kind of poetical justice inflicted on his enormities.

But be this as it may, it is quite certain that a herd of Calmucks have since invaded the English Parnassus, and fancied themselves poets, because they dealt in rhapsodies, affected misanthropy, and wrote fragments of poems connected by stars. No characters will suit these barbarians, but heroes who act in defiance of common sense, and outrage both religion and law, without motive or end; and heroines, who, in the common course of things, ought finally to settle in the purlieu of Covent Garden, or end their career in Bedlam or Bridewell. The scenes, too, in which these distinguished culprits act their extravagances, must likewise correspond with the gigantic nature of their offences, and the gigantic genius of the poet. It would not answer at all to lay the *venue* (as we lawyers say) in honest old England; it must be where monks prowl and monasteries abound; where there are plenty of banditti, and subterraneous caves, and *tinder* heart-ed nuns, whose passions are sublimated by the near neighbourhood of a burning mountain. The landscapes must be full of exotic beauties; the air must be all fragrance; the breezes all zephyrs or whirlwinds; the flowers all green-house plants; and the sun must by all means shine with a golden lustre, a fiery heat, tempered with a most inde-

scribable kind of a sort of mellow gentleness, only to be found in the present English poetry. Honest John Bull, who seldom sees it shine at all in the sky, will bask himself in the rays of this hot poetry, like one of our negroes in the dog-days.

For the incidents, there must be nothing common or ordinary ; nothing calculated to sooth the feelings after the busy battle of daily interests or passions ; nothing calculated to awaken virtuous impulses, or recommend those gentle, domestic affections, that constitute the beauties of our existence, and moderate the whirlwind of those passions, which, when not restrained, are fatal to the peace of society. They must be so luxuriously tender, as to melt the reader into ineffable ecstasies ; so inconceivably romantic, as to pass all human understanding ; or so incomparably horrific, as to awaken even the superannuated sympathies of a Corinthian of twenty, or a fashionable young lady of eighteen : videlicet—rape, murder, piracy, adultery, robbing convents, and hanging up lusty friars by wholesale—swindling, parricide, seduction, and other feats of modern poetical chivalry. All the lowly and lonely landscapes of nature ; all the gentler emotions of the heart, that refine and purify social life, while they contribute so exquisitely to the sum human happiness ; all virtuous actions ; all pure of and blameless sentiment ; all genuine feeling of the exalted, the beautiful, the sublime—of heroic actions directed to noble ends—every thing, in short, that appeals to a well regulated judgment and a sound heart, is discarded and despised by this banditti of Parnassus, who treat their readers as if they were a London mob, only to be excited by murders, executions, funerals, and coronations. Lord Byron is certainly in some measure responsible for this second irruption of the Vandals, it being through the example of his success that they

have been tempted to follow, as the first successful effort of the barbarians to gain a footing in Italy, was the signal for other hordes to pour down the hills.

This heroic, Jonathan-Wild species of poetry, has quite got the better of Walter Scott and his moss-troopers in rhyme, although Mr. Scott still continues to make head successfully with the same heroes, marshalled in a phalanx of prose instead of a flying squadron of rhyme, as formerly. Nobody imitates him now, except a few of our backwood bards, who have not yet been inspired with a conviction that they are at least a full modern poetical age behind the fashion.

Anacreon Moore, too, has been nearly put out by the ascending star of his Lordship's genius; and his sprightly, luxurious levity, has yielded to the more energetic force of heroic debaucheries. The laughing lyrics of the one have given precedence to the passionate heroics of the other, seasoned as they both were with about the same proportion of the salt of sensuality. Moore's epigrammatic license is fast fading before the tragic profligacy of Childe Harold's abstraction, aided by the comical wickedness of Don Juan, who reduces to practice the theory of the Childe. Certain it is, that Moore has either degenerated in fancy and sprightliness, or the world has become tired of the tinkling of his pretty little fingers. I think he will scarcely last out another fashionable age. Indeed, the critics, who, by the way, generally get tired of an author as soon as they have said all they have to say about him, begin to show their teeth at little Anacreon pretty smartly. This is most especially the case with those who do not like the freedoms he has lately taken with the "greatest and most beloved monarch England ever saw," as the *Courier* calls him. N. B. He don't mean Alfred.

They long ago, as you may recollect, found fault with his morality ; but while they did not question the excellence of his poetry, this was rather an advantage to his works. Now, however, they begin to think better of his morals, and worse of his poetry, which, in my opinion, is a strong symptom of mortality.

The lake-school poetry, of which Mr. Wordsworth is the head, has also suffered in no inconsiderable degree by the bloody inroads of Lord Byron, his Giaours, his Corsairs, and his Don Juans. It would seem almost forgotten, were it not that we now and then see an attempt in some one of the magazines to revive the old controversy, and to prove that it is the only genuine poetical school in this country—I suppose according to the “invariable principles” of Mr. Bowles. I think you will agree with me, that the poetry which requires argument to demonstrate its excellence, must be pretty much on a par with the justice of a cause that requires the ingenuity of an advocate to make it apparent. Still, it would occasion me not the least surprise, if, when the fashionables, as they probably will ere long, become tired and sated with the heroic villanies and eastern exaggerations of the Byron school, they should turn all at once to the opposite extreme of affected simplicity, sentimental ignorance, and simpering childishness.

The laureat Southey, who is “himself alone” a sort of Dom Daniel, Thalabaic, Curse of Kehama bard, is, I am told, exceedingly wroth, that Lord Byron's heroics should thus supersede his epics, and sapphics to boot. He very naturally thinks, that his singular intrepidity in writing against both rhyme and reason, fairly entitles him to the praise of an original genius, and to something more than the bliss of dulness, which, you know, is to be for-

gotten before one is rotten, to speak poetically. He made a great effort the other day to retrieve his waning reputation, in a poem called Judgment, which combines the want of rhyme, in some of his poems; with the want of reason, in others. I am at this moment both poor and thirsty, but I would not be in the Laureat's place for two hundred pounds, and two butts of the best sack ever brewed. It is a sort of "O yes" production, in which the late king, Heaven preserve him from the fangs of the Laureat! is subjected to a posthumous Egyptian trial, upon charges brought forward by the devil, who employs Junius and John Wilkes as his attorney and solicitor generals. The advocates abuse the king, and the devil abuses the advocates for not abusing him more. However, his Majesty is acquitted in the end, to the great mortification of the devil and several democrats present, and to the great content of the loyal Laureat, who drinketh three times three cups of sack, and singeth hallelujahs three times three, as loud as he can bawl. King George, having thus cleared up his character, is introduced to Washington, whose countrymen cannot but feel flattered at seeing their hero in such honourable company. Such is the *chef d'œuvre* of the Laureat. I pass over his canting about the divine right of kings, and his nauseating flattery of the dead and the living. There is nothing on earth so grovelling, pitiful, and debasing, as the modern sentiment of loyalty. Instead of being like the enlarged, ennobling feeling of patriotism, which embraces the country and the people, their prosperity and glory—which is connected with our earliest impressions, and identified with all of happiness we have ever enjoyed in the land of our birth—it is nothing more than a servile, interested parasite, who praises by trade, and flatters the king for bread. "God save the

king," shouts Loyalty, and licks the dust at his feet—"God save the people, the myriads who have souls to save as well as kings," cries Patriotism, and lifts its eyes, not to its master on earth, but to its Maker in heaven.

Thomas Crabbe, and Thomas Campbell, have also felt the effects of this whirlwind of popularity, which has gone near to prostrate them at the feet of Lord Byron, for the present moment at least. Mr. Crabbe is a country clergyman, and has given a series of poems founded on the results, I presume, of his experience; descriptive of rural manners, and rural vices, as they present themselves in this country. In so doing, he has exhibited pictures, so different from those which the imagination ever delights to associate with the repose of nature, and the calm of rural scenes, that one cannot help hating him, if they are false, and can hardly forgive him, if they are true. He seems, in truth, a sour and crabbed genius, as his name imports; and I never look into his works without thinking when you and I used to stand on the bridge at *** ****, to see the crabs come floating up with the young flood on the surface of the little creek. Though the sun shone ever so bright, and the waters flowed ever so clear, these rogues were never in a good humour. If we threw them a bait, they would snap at it in a great passion; if a cloud passed over the sun, or a bright beam darted into the water, or a wild flower overhung the bank of the stream, shadow or substance, it was all one, they snap at every thing; even a brother crab could not come near them without being in danger from their claws.

Thomas Crabbe seems a crab among poets. In the midst of rural scenes, and rural people; in hamlets, woods, and smiling vales, where poets have heretofore sought and found those pictures

of innocent simplicity and virtuous happiness, that delight equally the heart and the fancy, he finds, alas, if it be true! he finds little else but gross corruption and vulgar vice. Country bumpkins, and rosy milk-maids, are presented to us in all the deformity, without any of the splendours, of tragic vice and high-born crime; corrupt without refinement, and mingling the extreme of sensuality with the grossest barbarity. Now all this may be true of the people composing Mr. Crabbe's congregation; but I can never be brought to believe, that it is true as a general picture of rural life and rural manners, in this, or any other country. At this moment, I recall to mind our little village in *****, and the surrounding ones, whose little spires point to heaven from the top of almost every hill. It is true there is no necessity there for those nurseries of dangerous idleness--poor-houses, where laziness is prepared for vice, and penitentiaries, where vice is ripened into crime; yet if there were, I should be sorry to think, that Mr. Crabbe's pictures of rural depravity could ever have any application to them. I am sure they have not now, unless indeed they have degenerated from their ancient simplicity within the few years of my absence.

But admitting that rural life and manners are generally what he describes them, still it does not seem to be the province of the poet thus to drive poetry from one of her strong holds, where she has so long delighted to entrench herself. Let the members of the societies, and the parish officers, report, if they will, the progress of vice, and the depravity of their fellow-creatures; it is their business to record these mortifying facts, and to suggest the remedy. But I cannot help thinking it a perversion of the heart's best feelings, a prostitution of the powers of genius, to employ its glowing pencil in painting human nature, not in-

dividually, but collectively, in any circumstances or situation, as so great a scoundrel. It is good for us to believe that virtue and happiness reside together somewhere in this villanous world—to believe they exist, although not with ourselves. I never knew a man who avowed his disbelief of this, who did not sooner or later exhibit in his conduct a deplorable proof, that he drew his conviction from the polluted fountain of his own hardened and corrupt heart. This faith in the integrity of man, is almost as necessary to the practice of virtue, as faith in a higher being; the loss of the one, or the other, is the signal for vice to stalk forth, relieved from that curb which even a *belief* in the existence of virtue imposes. It is for these causes I do not like Mr. Crabbe's poetry, although, as a poet, it appears to me, he is superior to all his contemporaries in many of the highest attributes of the art. Thomson and Goldsmith, and all the poets of nature and of rural life, make us love the poor, and wish them well. But I doubt whether Mr. Crabbe has not strengthened a disposition, already too prevalent here, to despise the common people, and represent them as equally destitute of morals and refinement. We do not read poetry to acquire worldly experience, but rather to temper those bitter feelings towards our fellow-creatures, which worldly contests, the collisions of interest, and the struggles of ambition, are so apt to inspire. We have enough of reality to make us almost hate the world, without resorting to the imagination to heighten the picture. Indeed, my dear brother, I cannot help thinking, that poetry is most hopefully employed here at present. Lord Byron is devoting his genius to misanthropy and profligacy; Mr. Wordsworth to dead asses; Mr. Southey to dead kings; and Mr. Crabbe to the overthrow of that happy reliance on the virtuous simplicity of

a large portion of the human race, which formed the great charm of one of the most delightful species of poetry.

Many years ago, at least many years for a young bachelor of forty-five, like myself, I read Campbell's Pleasures of Hope, and Rogers' Pleasures of Memory, with almost overwhelming delight. It was in the season of hope, when I hoped all things, and believed all things, and before I began to suspect the casket of memory was somewhat like Pandora's box. I have lately read them again, but with a pleasure greatly diminished. Perhaps I am losing my relish for poetry, and I should suspect it myself, if I did not recur to the other old friends of my youth with increasing delight. They still continue to charm, and seem the same, or better, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. They do not depend upon any fleeting charm of novelty, or a striking catastrophe, for a temporary interest, which diminishes at every successive perusal; but upon certain intellectual and moral beauties, such as render the companions of our youth only the more dear and precious, as they become every day more familiar.

I will not trouble you with any more poets at present, as I do not intend to play the critic, any further than retailing the opinions of some of the most refined and judicious people I have met with, in the course of my residence and rambles in this country. There is one modest bard here, that deserves to be mentioned as a novelty. I mean the quaker, Bernard Barton, who has been moved lately by the spirit of poetry. As might be expected, he writes with sweetness, simplicity, and good sense; the two latter very rare commodities at present in poetry, when the bards of England go abroad to write, and bring home all the fervid heats of a tropical sun, backed by the scorching

sirocco of the desert, to excite us into a proper degree of poetical enthusiasm. Friend Bernard's poetry is tender without exaggeration, and simple without childishness. His Pegasus is neither an elephant, a camel, nor a dromedary, but a horse of good pace and habits. In a better age of poetry he would be more admired. As it is, his Muse wants a few of the buttons of the honourable band of gentlemen pensioners to make her shine, and is, moreover, rather *drab-coloured* for the present flashy taste.

LETTER XXIX.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

Mr. John Murray's Drawing Room, like Wills' Coffee House, in the Spectator's day, is at present the resort of many of the wits and scholars of the orthodox party, particularly those whose works are published by him. It is there, as I am informed, the fiery dragon of criticism, the renowned William Gifford, holds his state, and condemns authors, by dozens, to the rack of modern criticism, to which all the tortures of the inquisition are but cakes and gingerbread. I do not know whether you have seen the last number of the Quarterly Review, but it is even more openly and unblushingly rancorous and abusive than all former ones. Poor lady Morgan, instead of being let off with

some wholesome and gentlemanly ridicule for her affectation of French and Italian phrases, and her tittle tattle about little great people, is attacked with an unmanly, vindictive fury, utterly beneath a civilized man, and disgraceful to a work which affects to direct the public taste, and to preside over the public morals. The Reviewer scolds like an old woman, and actually calls names with a facility, which shows he has not forgotten the accomplishments of the cabin-boy of the Newcastle collier. There is certainly little of correct public sentiment here, or such a specimen of rancorous hostility to a woman of good character, in her private life, at least, would not be suffered; nor would she be treated as if she were divested of every characteristic appertaining to a decent female. But the gall of this mighty Attic seems inexhaustible; for from lady Morgan he turns to abusing the whole French nation, with the exception of the pigtailed ultras, with an appetite as keen and unsated as ever. Considering that the writers of this country had for centuries past been employed in this praise-worthy object, of scandalizing France, one would be inclined to suppose the subject exhausted; but we would suppose a great mistake, for the worthy Reviewer has exceeded all that have gone before him. The offence, which provoked this formidable assault, is neither more nor less, than that France holds out such temptations to the English gentry, that they are flocking thither in great numbers to take up their residence, where they can escape the blessings of English liberty, and English taxation. They can live for less than half the expense, and at the same time enjoy the delights of one of the finest climates, as well as the gayest society, in the world. This is enough for our ferocious Reviewer, who will never forgive France for holding out these attrac-

tions to the rich, any more than he will pardon our country for seducing the poor of England from their allegiance to taxes, tithes, and poor rates.

It is whispered, that it is not a little amusing to see the low bows and lowly deference of the poor authors to this divinity of Reviews, as he sits on a sopha in gallant state. As the dispenser of a temporary, yet exceedingly profitable renown, he is a personage of singular consequence in the eyes of those who only exist in the smiles of a Reviewer. When he nods, Parnassus trembles, like another Olympus at the nod of another Jove; and when he speaks, there is not a dog in Grub-street, or elsewhere, that dare bark for the life of him.

Mr. ***** is a great favourite of the critic, on the score of his arguments against the existence of any thing like general suffrage, in any age of the English constitution. His work is, however, not only one of great research, but of general impartiality, and supplies a very important chasm in the history of Europe, after the fall of the Roman Empire. I have read it with much pleasure and advantage, and think it, on the whole, wonderfully impartial, considering how completely literature and party-spirit are confounded with each other in this country. The ***** is an ***** and one of the most remorseless plunderers of Egypt and the catacombs, the present age of scientific robbers has produced. He has fitted up a raw-head and bloody-bones-place, in imitation of the catacombs, filled with fragments of mortality—bones, sinews, and limbs of human beings, who died three thousand years ago, and abundance of hieroglyphics that nobody can decipher. But the most valuable of all his treasures is a real mummy, which has attracted all the fashionable young ladies of the town to see it. 'Tis a shockingly

disgusting looking relict of mortality, partaking of nothing sublime or elevating; a mere dried representative of nobody knows who. The learned adore it, because it has settled the important question concerning the manner of extracting the brains, which it appears was actually through the nostrils, as affirmed by Herodotus. The whole place is in the highest degree fantastically gloomy, and its decorations little else than the mouldering remains, and shapeless fragments, of a remote antiquity, that carry with them nothing either to delight the eye, or improve the understanding. Yet the exhibition, for a whole fortnight, was the favourite resort of fashionable blue stockings, antiquaries, and Corinthians. The whole town was mad after *****'s mummy.

But peace to Mr. Gifford and his retainers. Let us talk of little Walter Scott, who, though a tory creature, is one of the most pleasant, unaffected specimens of the *Genus Irritabile* in the world. By the way, he is a little lame, a circumstance that may account for the halting irregularity of his verse. Lord Byron, too, labours under a similar impediment in his walk; and, as his verse partakes of the like infirmity, it might be a curious speculation to inquire into the occult connexion between a lame leg and a lame couplet. But I must leave this matter to the dabblers in cause and effect. I believe there is no doubt of Sir Walter Scott being the person, who, in the bombastic phrase of the critics, is called the "Great Unknown." It is a fact tolerably well known, and if there were any doubt, the extravagant adulation of Blackwood's Magazine would resolve it. His reasons for preserving this affectation of the incognito, are quite clear to me. He wrote himself down in poetry before he began with prose, and that in a good measure by prematurely disclosing his name, and

thus depriving his readers of the pleasure of wondering, than which nothing communicates a higher zest to a book. The benefits of invisibility are invaluable to authors, who can neither be hit by the critic, nor wounded by personal attacks, so long as they remain unseen. Besides, authors are a sort of divinity, very apt to turn out an Egyptian stork, or arrant mumbo jumbo, if you approach them too near. They should always keep out of the way, that the public may see nothing but the beauties of their minds. Like the famous chess-playing automaton, lately detected, Genius loses half the admiration of the vulgar, so soon as they find there is a man in it.

Sir Walter grew wise from experience. He dismounted from his eight-footed Pegasus, and, disguising himself in plain prose, went over almost precisely the same ground that he had before done in his poems. This is one of the advantages an author enjoys, by being only guessed at, instead of positively identified. Another is, the greater degree of freedom he enjoys, by no longer labouring under the restraints of a personal responsibility, either to the critics or the public, for what he writes. He is like a fine steed in a meadow, without saddle or bridle, whose playful gambols receive inimitable grace from the consciousness of freedom which accompanies them. On the contrary, an author, who has been long before the public, is trammelled by his previous reputation, and precluded in some degree from the free exercise of his genius, by the fear of being convicted of inconsistency. Not only this, but every little sameness of manner, every similarity in character or incident, will be the more readily detected. Indeed, if a writer, after exhausting both his memory and imagination in verse, is unwilling to remain quiet, the very best thing he can do, I should think, is

to resolve himself into prose, and write all over again in an anonymous character. The difference in style, and the total dissimilarity in these separate modes of writing, will go far to prevent a detection, as the memory of most readers is incapable of instituting the close comparison which is necessary for that purpose. In short, to indulge in one more comparison, a mask to an author is what a veil is to beauty; it adds the zest of doubt and curiosity to other gratifications.

Do not imagine, from these observations, that I am not a potent admirer of the "Great Unknown," alias, Sir Walter Scott. I have received too much pleasure from his prose writings not to feel grateful. Many an hour of ennui in this land of blue devils hath he whiled away—and many a lonely day of sickly confinement hath he made tolerable to me by the exertions, or, as it would seem, the relaxations of his genius. Shall not the sick man be grateful to him who administers to the mind, as well as to him that ministers to the body? Besides, every soul that ever knew him bears testimony to the worth of his private character, notwithstanding his being somewhat obnoxious on the score of his toryism. His pleasant, unaffected, unpretending manners are exemplary in a man—but, in a successful author, they are little less than miraculous. His heart, I am assured, is free from a single spark of that jealous irritability which divides men of genius, and prevents them from governing the republic of letters more despotically than a senate of Venice.

There seems, indeed, something excessively unadulterated in Sir Walter—but I hate these pitiful titles, that sink men of genius to the level of sheriffs, and aldermen knights. Nothing can more strikingly exemplify the universal good will he had acquired, than the fact, that, until the affair of the

"Beacon," his politics had made him no enemies, nor his unequalled success, as an author, deprived him of a single friend among his rival contemporaries. Though he publishes, in one year, almost as much as Homer and Virgil wrote all their lives, he does not appear to withhold himself from any rural relaxation, or city gala. His face is extremely indicative of honest good nature, and his face appears the mirror of his mind.

But for all this, I cannot allow him to be equal either to a Fielding or an Edgeworth, whatever may be the fashionable verdict of the day. In this opinion I am supported by the authority of those judges of the secret tribunal I spoke of, whose approbation, after all, is essentially necessary to the permanent fame of every living author. I will give you an abstract of their opinions, mixed up with some of my own, which last I desire you will hold in especial reverence. No doubt my fair cousin ****, who, as you inform me, not long ago set the bed-curtains on fire at two o'clock in the morning, by falling asleep over the Abbot, will be greatly affronted at seeing the Great Unknown so sacrilegiously undervalued.

Genius may be said to be in its greatest perfection, when it combines a due proportion of invention and judgment. Invention furnishes the materials of every genuine work of imagination; judgment arranges and combines them, so as to produce a striking, yet, at the same time, a probable catastrophe. The talents, then, which are necessary to the production of a mere historical novel or poem, founded on incidents already recorded and arranged in history, and exhibiting characters and manners which no longer exist but in books, are very different from those which are essential to the delineation of existing life and manners. In the former case, it is only necessary to consult books; in

the latter, the world must be studied. To depict the manners of a past age, memory is the principal qualification necessary; to paint men as they live and move before us; to exhibit new varieties of character, new modes of speech, and habits and peculiarities never before embodied in books; to collect these in groups, happily contrast them with each other, and conduct them by a series of natural incidents, produced by natural causes and motives, to a happy issue, is another, and a higher task. It requires a habit of nice observation; a keen discrimination of character; a fertile inventive power; a nice judgment—in short, almost every qualification that enters into the composition of a perfect intellect, the united product of great natural powers, matured by extensive experience and observation of human life. The writer of an historical novel, the mere delineator of manners which no longer exist but in books and ballads, may be compared to the painter who copies old pictures with tolerable correctness; but the other is the artist who roams into the wide fields of nature, catching not only her fixed, but varying and incidental beauties, and communicating to his pictures the grace and novelty of a pure original.

The author of the Waverley novels has pursued a path, which saved him, in a great measure, the trouble of invention. The principal characters, as well as events, are historical; and where he has filled up the chasm with incidents of his own, I appeal to the judgment of reflecting persons, if he has not deviated into the wild impossibilities of romance? Where the characters are not absolutely historical, they are derived from old plays and ballads, which also furnish models of language for the actors. Indeed, it may be observed here, that not only the Great Unknown, but a vast number of the present race of poets, have poached pretty liberally in the

old plays of Queen Elizabeth and James the First. These, after lying in oblivion, except in the care of these industrious poachers, for two centuries, have at length begun to excite attention, and will probably before long be sufficiently known to ensure the detection of modern plagiarists. Without descending to particularize these borrowings of the Great Unknown, it cannot but strike every reader, who takes the trouble to reflect on the incidents of the tale of Kenilworth, for instance, that they are principally taken from Miss Aikin's Court of Elizabeth, where they are purely historical; and that where the author has attempted to sketch from his own resources, he has almost invariably deviated into common place or caricature. Indeed, to me it appears, that through the whole of the work there is an air of reckless extravagance, a daring disregard to probability, that takes from the characters every feature of historical likeness, and gives to historical facts every characteristic of improbability.

With the exception of Sir Hugh Robsart and Tressilian, there is almost a total absence of interesting characters. Queen Elizabeth is nothing but a coarse virago; Leicester a miserable dupe of a clumsy astrologer; and Sussex, Blount, Antony Foster, and the rest, very common persons. The originals of Lambourne, Giles Gosling, and Demetrius, may be found in a dozen of the old plays; but where to find Wayland Smith, the mysterious blacksmith, and Dicky Sledge, is more than I know; not within the limits of nature, certainly. I cannot tell how it is, but Dicky seems the identical Gilpin Horner of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, merely divested of his supernatural features. Raleigh is a fine personage in history; but apparently rather of too high an aim for our author, since the only incident of any consequence, illustrative of

his character, introduced into the work, is that of the cloak, familiar to every school-boy. Raleigh is, of all the personages in the piece, the one of whom the author ought to have made the most, and he has made nothing. The Countess Amy, who appears to have been intended by him for the principal object of interest, is only interesting through the melancholy catastrophe of her death. She would have merited little sympathy, had she not fallen a victim to her faults. Her conduct as a daughter, a mistress, and a wife, savours only of disobedience, vanity, and selfishness. She did not scruple to destroy the happiness of her father and lover by her elopement; nor could she be restrained, without infinite difficulty, from jeopardizing the safety of her husband for the pleasure of shining at court. Sir Walter Scott's leaning towards high rank appears conspicuously on various occasions. But the one in which it is most offensively displayed, is the incident, where Tressilian is placed at the mercy of Leicester, in the midnight rencontre. Poetical justice, every generous feeling, was in favour of Tressilian's getting the better of the Earl, by whom he had been injured and insulted; nor would his so doing have altered the course of the story in the least, as honest Dicky Sledge might have equally interfered to save the life of Leicester, had Tressilian been base enough to take it under similar circumstances. The degradation of Tressilian is therefore wanton, unnecessary, and unfeeling, inasmuch as it is calculated to lessen one of the few worthy persons in the piece in the eyes of most readers. In truth, our author has scarcely dealt fairly with his thoughtless readers; for while he makes Leicester act the part of a fool and a knave, he still takes care to invest him with a character of elevated splendour, that is calculated to impose upon them with the idea that he is still worthy of

admiration, if not of respect. I am inclined to fear, that Sir Walter deals out poetical justice agreeably to precedency, and consults the court calendar to find who is to be disarmed or thrown down in combat. Yet there are rare touches in the work, that seem those of a master's hand, and indicate that the author knows the nearest way to the heart. The parting incident, where the daughter, in bidding her father good night, previously to her elopement, cuts off the lock of hair that had become entangled in his mantle, and gives it him, is exquisitely natural and affecting. It makes us lament that the author, capable of such things, should waste his powers on mystical old hags, half-witch, half virago, who declaim like sybils, scold like fishwomen, and carry their energies to a pitch of extravagance truly abominable. There is a marvellous similitude in these sublime scolds, these "pass quick and begone" ladies, that begins to be tedious. They all seem to belong to the same old family of Lapland witches, from Meg Merrilies, the first and by far the best, to Norna of the Fitful Head, the most extravagant shrew and scold of all. No age, I should think, that was not tired of nature, and its thousand varied charms, could relish the disgusting and horrible tale told by this old virago, at midnight, to the gentle daughters of Magnus Troil. The Pirate has just come out, and has shaken the popularity of the author so sensibly, that it begins to be rumoured, he will shortly proceed to give us a third edition of the old beauties of his mind, in the shape of a series of plays. This is certainly making the most of one's wealth, and reminds me of a cunning fellow of the beau monde, who lately passed the same quantity of silver through two editions, once in the shape of a service of plate, and once as a beautiful tea set, after

which he coined it into money, dashed away in a curricule to the admiration of every body, and died game at last.

The Quarterly Review has lately given us a general criticism on the Waverley novels. It came out so exactly in the nick of time, that one might be tempted almost to suspect it was intended to whet the public appetite for the long expected "Pirate." This was somewhat necessary, for I assure you the better sort of readers, who consult their own taste, begin to be a little sated with these high-seasoned dishes, and to long for something plain and substantial. The reviewer makes the following remarks, but without, in my opinion, giving the true solution of the enigma. "All our readers," says the critic, "must have observed how much better he paints beggars, gypsies, smugglers, and peasants, the favourites of kings and queens, and kings and queens themselves, the very lowest and the very highest ranks of society; *than that rank to which he must himself belong.* How much bolder, and how much more accurate, appears to us the pencil that struck out Dandie Dinmont, than that which drew, though with far more elaboration, Mr. Pleydell! How much more do his Mary of Scotland and Elizabeth of England appear to resemble queens, than his Julia Mannering does a young lady? *How comes he to copy more correctly what he knows imperfectly, than what he knows well?*"

To resolve this singular paradox, I believe it will be only necessary to refer to some of the preceding remarks in this humble epistle. The reviewer most certainly, without intending it, has furnished the strongest corroboration to the opinions, which, as I stated before, I have derived from some of the best judges in this country. The very reason, why Sir Walter fails in delineating

that state of society, and those characters with which he must necessarily be most familiar in real life, is precisely because he does not paint from his own observation. His beggars, his gypsies, his kings, his queens, and their favourites, his mystical beldames and his smugglers, are drawn from ballads, traditions, and historical records, that give either such complete pictures, or at least such bold outlines, that a dexterous artist can either copy the one, or fill up what was wanting in the other. The characters of Mary and Elizabeth are so hacknied before even ordinary readers, that it is only requisite to make the former vain and passionate, and the latter a great swearer, and memory will supply the rest, giving at the same time full credit to the artist for the whole picture. The traditions and the poetry of the borders supply as many gypsies, characters, and anecdotes, as any man can desire, and the coasts of Scotland abound in tales of smugglers. Even James Hogg can paint these; and it is only necessary to be a good border antiquary to picture life, not as it is, but as it was a century ago.

But Julia Mannering, Mr. Pleydell, and every character in the whole of this series of novels, which appertains to the class of real, actually existing beings, such as we live and move amongst at present, are destitute of all claim to vigour or originality. It is only necessary to place them beside those of Miss Edgeworth, to perceive at once, how much more easy it is to draw materials from history and tradition than from actual observation of life and manners. So with those incidents and events which can be referred to beings like ourselves, and to which we can apply the test of our own experience and observation. Nearly the same deplorable tameness and common-place characterize them all; and it

is only when the author envelopes himself in the mists of time, and the obscurity of provincial tradition, that he attains to a new species of fiction, compounded of improbabilities stretched on the rack, and characters not altogether human, nor yet quite supernatural, such as abound in the records of popular superstition.

Hence the apparently wonderful facility with which the author compiles these novels. The experience of a whole life furnished Fielding with the characters and incidents of *Tom Jones*; but traditions and ballads of old times supply the "Great Unknown" with ample materials for this kind of writing. The very notes to Walter Scott's different poems, contain a mass of border lore, amply sufficient for half a dozen novels like *Guy Mannering* and *Rob Roy*. If there be any exception to these remarks, it is in "*The Heart of Mid Lothian*," which presents to us two characters that belong to all times, and are perfect in their kind: I mean old *Davie Deanes* and his daughter *Jeannie*. They are sufficient to redeem all the old half-bred witches, and half-bred wizards, in the whole series, and possess an interest derived from the purest springs of nature and probability, far more intense and legitimate than all the rest of these extravagant creations of ignorance and superstition.

But with all these drawbacks, if such they be in the eyes of the present age, the *Great Unknown* is still a pearl among swine. He and *Miss Edgeworth* are the twin stars of *Boeotia*, and not only shine by their own light, but by the reflection of surrounding darkness. The one, as a painter of life as it is, the other of life as it was, is without a rival in the present times. The author of *Waverley* is a great second-hand artist; a capital pencil in copying old pictures, and colouring them afresh. What I particularly commend him for is, that

though a friend to the government, he does not think it necessary to *cant*. There is a glow of vigorous freshness about him, so different from the faded, sickly, green, and yellow tribe of cotemporary novelists, that to read one of his tales, is like contemplating a rich landscape, with the flowers of the spring, and the dews of the clear mellow morning, blooming and glittering upon it, and the pure and fragrant breeze playing in our faces.

But I cannot help thinking it is placing him where he ought not to be, to put him on a level with Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith, and Miss Edgeworth. He belongs, I imagine, to a different class of beings; to a class of authors, who, when the charm of novelty expires, and curiosity is satisfied in the development of the story, will never be much relished or sought after for other and more lasting beauties. Of Fielding, I think it may be fairly said, that he has produced one of the most consummate works of fiction that ever the world saw. In knowledge of life and human motives; in variety, strength, contrast, and probability of character; in the invention and unequalled skill in arranging his incidents; and in the simplicity and perfection of the denouement of the story, *Tom Jones* has never, I believe, been surpassed. Smollett is only second, yet a great way off; and Goldsmith, in the delineation of human nature at the domestic fire-side of virtuous simplicity, is yet without an equal. Each of these writers, without going out of the bounds of probability, or offending against "the modesty of nature," by extravagant and incongruous events, or boisterous, uncontrolled passion, has produced works, that appeal far more powerfully to the heart and the imagination, than the dashing succession of characters and events, that only hang together by a chain of improbabilities.

or by the thread of history, exhibited in the work of the Great Unknown. Miss Edgeworth, among the living novelists, so far as my reading extends, is the only one that has ever heard there was such a thing as human nature, or who is aware that, by the exercise of a chastened judgment, a delicate taste, and a playful wit, ordinary characters and everyday incidents, may be invested with charms a thousand times more engaging and interesting, than the monstrous creations, or copies of a Mathurin, or even a Great Unknown. The characters delineated by Miss Edgeworth, are admirable for their nature and probability; and did she possess the inventive faculty of the three great writers I have named, she would be their equal in genius, their superior in delicacy. She would be the female Fielding. Like the solitary nightingale, Miss Edgeworth sings alone; and it would seem that she is discouraged by the loud and boisterous praises lavished upon works so every way opposite to hers, that to admire the one, is in effect to condemn the other. She seems of late to have retired from the field, leaving it free to the gigantic race of brobdingnag writers, who astonish us little Gullivers with the gambols of a diabolical tribe of monsters, whose ordinary actions and passions are altogether beyond our comprehension.

I have often thought, that one great cause of the popularity of Kenilworth is the lofty and inflated style, in which the magnificence of queen Elizabeth and the pageantry of the castle is set forth. People, and especially those who have little or no experience in such trumpery delights, love to be in great company, and to witness splendid shows, even in imagination; nor is there any thing on which the inexperienced fancy banquets with more avidity. Those, for instance, who did not witness the late coronation, but took their impressions from

the newspaper accounts of that notable foolery, will have an idea that it was all grandeur, and sublimity, and devotion. For my part, I never saw any thing that so completely realized the mummeries of stage royalty. The champion was incomparably ridiculous ; the band of gentlemen pensioners, with their twelve hundred buttons apiece, looked like so many representatives of Birmingham button-makers ; and the nobility, with their long tails and coronets held up, like the posterity of Banquo, in their procession across the stage, made me laugh heartily. In fact, the whole ceremony was most empty and absurd, inasmuch as it no longer carried with it the religious, moral, or political feelings which gave it importance in those times, when kings were anointed with oil from heaven, and consequently held their crowns by divine right. The king certainly sustained the weight of his dignity, that is to say, his velvet, ermine, and jewelry, with great courage ; but after all, it is difficult to make the drinking of wine, and the washing of hands, any thing more than very common-place matters.

In order to disenchant the readers of Kenilworth, about your fireside, from the thralldom in which their imagination is held, with regard to the splendors and refinements of the age of Elizabeth, it may not be amiss to recall to mind some particulars concerning the court manners of those days. Our people, who see nothing of kingly state, are prone to think that every thing connected with royalty, past or present, must possess a certain species of refinement and delicacy, altogether unattainable by common mortals. I have therefore taken the trouble to ransack some old books, and to extract from the records of the times, a few particulars, from which it will be seen, that the manners, amusements, and occupations of the court, were such as

would at present disgrace any mob, but an English mob.

Every popular work that appears here carries double, and oftentimes treble; that is to say, it opens a sale for a dull tome of antiquarian trumpery, if not, an elegant volume of illustrations by some eminent engraver. Accordingly, Kenilworth was followed up lately by the publication of one of the dullest books ever imposed upon the patience of mankind. I mean Master Robert Laneham's account of the "Entertainment of the Queen's Majesty at Killingworth Castle," &c. which contains unutterable prosings. It however furnishes ample proof of what I have just suggested.—Among other rare matters, it is recorded, that Arion appeared mounted on a great Dolphin twenty feet long, carrying a complete orchestra of most rare performers in his belly. Thirteen bears were beaten for the amusement of the Virgin Queen and her dainty court, as appears from Master Robert Laneham's Diary. "Well, sir," saith Master Laneham, "the bears were brought forth into the court, the dogs set to them to argue the point face to face; they had learned counsel also on both parts: What may they be counted partial that are retainers on both sides? I ween no. Very fierce, both the one and the other, in argument; if the dog in pleading should pluck a bear by the throat, the bear with traverse would claw him again by the scalp. Therefore, thus with fending and proving, plucking and tugging, scratching and biting by plain tooth and nail on one side and the other, such expense of blood and leather was there, between them, as a month's licking, I ween, will not recover."

"It was sport very pleasant of these beasts, to see the bear, with his pink eyes, seeing after his enemy's approach, the nimbleness and wait of the

dog to take his advantage, and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assault. If he was bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free; that if he was bitten once, then what a shift with biting, with clawing, with roaring, tossing and tumbling, he would work to wind himself from them; and when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice with the blood and slaver about his physiognomy, was a matter of goodly relief."

In the evening, after this "goodly relief," Master Robert Laneham proceeds to state: "Within, also, in the evening, was showed before her Highness by an Italian, such feats of agility, in goings, turnings, tumblings, castings, hops, jumps, leaps, skips, springs, gambols, somersets, caperings and flights, forwards, backwards, sideways, downwards and upwards, with sundry windings, gyvings, and circumflexions; all so lightly and with such easiness, as by me in few words is not expressible by pen or speech, I tell you plainly." During this visit there were three and twenty hogsheds of beer drunk by the Court; and to crown all, a miracle was performed by the Queen's Majesty, who cured, with her accustomed mercy and charity, nine persons of that painful and dangerous disorder called the King's Evil; for the kings and queens of this realm, without other medicine, save only by handling and prayers, do cure it." Here are all the characteristics of ignorance, superstition, and barbarism, combined.

In the time of the Tudors, of which race Elizabeth was the last, the festivities of Christmas, Easter, &c. were distinguished by a mixture of vulgar wastefulness, tasteless extravagance, and paltry meanness. The apartments of the king were strewn with rushes, and, to use the words of an old writer, "the staires and floores of the other

roomes are daintilie inlayed with filthe, and whiles the fyres blazed gallantie in the greate chambers, those of the inferioure officials were shivering with the cold. Manye of the attendants were beggars, in truthe no better nor beggars." In the progress of refinement, it was enacted by the king, that none but "decent" persons should attend court, nor any "rascal" be employed as a domestic, nor any scullion permitted to go naked. The attendants at court are strictly prohibited from stealing locks or keys from cupboards, at houses where the king visits. The marshal is especially ordered to drive away all misguided, unworthy, and common women; and in order that the maids of honour may be kept in good case, they are allowed a chine of beef, a manchet, a loaf, and a gallon of beer, for breakfast.

It may give some idea of the purity of courts at this time, to recite some of the tenures by which lands were granted and held by different persons.

Robert de Gatton held the manor of Gateshill, in the county of Surry, by the sergeanty of being marshal of twelve *girls*, who followed the king's court. Homo de Gatton held the same manor by sergeanty of being marshal of all the *Bishop of Winchester's geese*, when the king should come into those parts. There are other instances of the kind. These were, it is true, prior to the reign of Queen Elizabeth: but that the court manners were not much more refined under her patronage, appears not only from her own conduct and language, but from the following curious anecdote. It is taken from a work called "*Illustrations of British History, Biography, Manners, &c.* by William Lodge, esq. Pursuivant at Arms, &c. F. S. A.;" and the heroine is the Countess of Shrewsbury, whose Lord was one of the persons having charge

of Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringham Castle. The anecdote, therefore, is of the age of Elizabeth.

"In 1592," says the writer, "the families of Cavendish and Stanhope, in the county of Nottingham, were on exceeding ill terms, insomuch that blood was shed on both sides. The following is a copy of a message sent by Mary Cavendish, Countess of Salop, to Sir Thomas Stanhope of Shelford, Knight, by one Holt and one Williamson, and delivered by Williamson Feb. 15th, 1592, in presence of certain persons whose names are subscribed. 'My Lady hath commanded me to say thus much to you: that though you be more wretched, vile, and miserable, than any creature living; and in your wickedness become more ugly in shape than the vilest toad in the world; and one to whom none of reputation would vouchsafe to send any message, yet she hath thought good to send thus much unto you: That she is contented you should live (and doth no waies wish your death) but to this end, that all the plagues and miseries that may befall any man, may light upon such a caitiff as you are: and that you should live to have all your friends forsake you; and without your great repentance, (which she looketh not for, because your life hath been so bad,) you will be damned perpetually in hell-fire.'"

As this letter is already of a good reasonable length, I will not trouble you with any more specimens of the manners of those times. Enough has been brought to satisfy you, that if the readers of Kenilworth were to have a genuine picture of Elizabeth's court presented to them, they would turn with disgust from its broad and vulgar licentiousness.

LETTER XXX.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE reserved another and peculiar class of labourers in the fruitful vineyard of English literature for a particular letter, inasmuch as they deserve special notice from an American, on account of the great attention they pay his country and countrymen. I mean the small fry of travellers which infest all parts of the habitable globe, and like a swarm of grasshoppers, skip over a country with most wonderful facility—live on the booksellers' shelves for a single summer, and the next year are followed by another swarm, who live another year, and give place to their successors. The number of these is incredible ; and so various are their characters and views, that the divisions of Sterne no longer comprehend half the species. One goes in search of the sublime and beautiful ; another to admire pictures, and relapse into a second idolatry, by adoring the Belviderean Apollo, or the Venus de Medicis ; another sets forth to glean scraps and anecdotes of great personages ; another to get rid of his guineas ; another to get rid of his time ; and another to get rid of himself. Some publish for fame, and a great many for money.

But by far the most numerous class of these perambulating persons, among the genus of British travellers, is that of the Smellfungii, mentioned by poor Yorick. These are people that endeavour to run away from ennui, as rogues do from their consciences; but being disappointed, go home and vent their spleen upon the poor countries that failed to cure an incurable malady. To this class I myself acknowledge some little affinity, for I plead guilty to having caught the blue devils in this country very severely. In France, I was as merry as a cricket; but the fogs of this isle gave me the vapours before I was here twenty-four hours. You may therefore deduct three per cent. from the aggregate of my descriptions of life and manners in this country.

The traveller who takes an excursion from this island to the continent of Europe, and maketh a book on his return to pay his expenses, also naturally belongs to the class of Smellfungii. If he wish his book to sell, he must of necessity abuse every thing abroad; for such is the patriotism of Englishmen, that they cannot endure to hear their neighbours praised. An English traveller, who did justice to France, would be considered a traitor to his country.

The traveller who sits himself down quietly at home, like Mr. Ashe, and writes a book of travels concerning a country three thousand miles off, is also a common character here. It is computed, that more than two-thirds of the travels which appear are the production of persons who have never been five miles from Grub-street in all their lives. It is held necessary for Lord Byron to travel to write poetry, but any body is allowed to write travels at home. The best critics say, that the closet traveller is likely to be by far the more entertaining,

since he can resort to his memory or imagination for what the reality might fail to furnish.

There is another class of travellers, English all over, but who go about their own country in the character of foreigners, praising every thing they see most lustily, and publishing their original, gross, and nauseous flattery as a translation from Mr. Goëde, the panegyrist of the British privileged orders, and the defamer of the nation, or Mr. somebody else. Much of the testimony to the character of the people, the excellence of their institutions, the purity of their morals, their intellectual superiority, and the freedom and happiness of the nation, is most unquestionably palmed upon the world under the false colours of a disinterested tribute from strangers.

But it is the innumerable rabble of British travellers, and pretended travellers, into the United States, that I intend particularly to analyze in all their varieties. It is from their misrepresentations, for it would be honouring them to call it ignorance, that the errors under which the people of England now labour, with respect to our country, are derived. Nothing, indeed, can equal the sturdy incredulity of this people, even the better sort of them, when they have once been fairly initiated into error, especially with regard to the Americans. I said nothing could equal this, but I beg leave to retract. Their ignorance of our country is superior to their prejudices, and their ill-breeding even beyond their ignorance; for it is easy to perceive, and indeed they take no pains to disguise it, that the solemn assurances of a gentleman and an eye-witness do not weigh a feather against the ponderous falsehoods of an anonymous writer, or a known writer without character or reputation. They call this English sincerity; but among foreigners it goes by the name of English rudeness.

These prejudices against our countrymen and their government are almost peculiar to the English. All over the continent of Europe, wherever I have been, a citizen of the United States meets with courtesy and attention, and his country is mentioned with respect or admiration; nor do the travellers, reviewers, and editors of periodical works, gain patronage and bread by treating us with injustice, any where but in England. Here is the great mart for vending the most absurd and ridiculous calumnies of all sorts; and such is the avidity with which the most contemptible fabrications are received and encouraged, that it is only necessary to be eminent in folly and falsehood to gain money and renown. Mr. James, who came to this country from America after the war, first published a sort of romance, which he called, if I recollect right, "A Synopsis of Naval Actions," full of the most gross fallacies. He was immediately patronised by the British admiralty; his Synopsis was republished, and swelled into a large volume; and now at last the whole is embodied in the history of the British navy, where it will descend as authority to future generations, and, as in every other portion of British history, the man will be seen striding over the lion. It is thus that their history is compiled; it passes from the newspapers to the periodical works, and from thence in a little while is incorporated into the mighty romance, and becomes the oracle of future times. James is now in high favour with the Lords of the Admiralty, and will be pensioned or sinecured soon, without doubt.

The English travellers in America, those I mean who really visit us, are of various kinds. I have taken pains to inquire into their characters and pursuits, and will be a little particular in my details. The first are British officers of one

grade or other, either civil or military, who have travelled from New-York to Canada, or from Canada to New-York; or who have resided some time in the States, or British provinces, and seek to recommend themselves to promotion by publishing a book of travels, calculated for the palate of honest John Bull, or his rulers. Lieut. *** , whose travels I sent you sometime ago, is quite in disgrace at head-quarters, because he had the unpatriotic candour to do us justice. It is not therefore very likely that any other officer will follow his example.

The next species of traveller in America is your literary merchant, agent, travelling pedler, or whatever name you may be pleased to call him. His estimation of the country depends upon the quantity of orders he receives for British goods, or the number of persons he can take in with his wares. If he be disappointed in his expectations, he returns home and publishes a book, denouncing the people as arrant knaves, because they would not suffer themselves to be made arrant fools. He has another object—to make up in the sale of his book for the deficiencies in the sale of his wares, which he is pretty sure of doing, if he only rail sufficiently at democracy and Yankees, and dilate copiously on bundling and gouging. The government always stands security for any loss the bookseller may sustain by the publication of this mass of dulness; and, if the worst come to the worst, the author is placed out to luxuriate in some good place or other. Honest Bradshaw Fearon is hand and glove with certain great people—that is to say, he is praised, and the rest will come in course.

Next comes the disappointed farmer, who, not having realized his sanguine expectations in America, returns home in exceeding wrath, and spits

fire and brimstone. After him comes the worthy who is sent out by an association of persons who contemplate emigration, for the purpose of examining and reporting on the prospects presented to such adventurers. Such a man is worth buying; and it pretty generally happens that it becomes his interest to make such a representation to his employers as will effectually prevent the execution of their project. This is afterwards swelled to an octavo, and published, with all the authority derived from the dignity of the mission.

Nothing escapes these industrious caterers for John Bull's delicate appetite, except perhaps precisely those points where we are most vulnerable. One of these, and one indeed of the better order of travellers, who invents and describes with more skill than usual, a person by the name of Howison, being on some occasion hard pushed to find fault with something, furiously draws his pen against our poor bull-frogs, and rates them terribly for putting his country out of countenance, by making better music than Catalani. Let the frogs look to it, and in future keep their mouths shut whensoever a British traveller passes by. Another of these poor rogues abuses the Yankees for the greatest rogues in the world, one and all, and affirms there is not an honest man among them. Yet thousands of British agents and merchants go to the United States poor, and return home rich! Can it be possible that it is diamond cut diamond; and that they are greater rogues than the Yankees, who he affirms are the greatest in the world?

The number of British travellers in almost all parts of the world, for some years past, and most especially at present, is almost incredible. The civil and military officers, wheresoever they go, are almost certain to be delivered of a book of travels on their return. If they cannot write them-

selves, there is a plenty of job-authors, who will undertake, at the most reasonable rates, to *do* their journals into English, and give them all the merit of the production. It is a part of the policy of the government to encourage this practice, since, by these means, it has been enabled to give whatever aspect it pleased to the state of society, the character of different nations, and the course of events in every quarter of the globe. Encroachments on the rights of the people of Ceylon, Hindostan, and Madagascar, may be easily made to appear as justifiable measures of self-defence, or, what is still better, as the progress of civilization and christianity. Resistance on the part of these becomes rebellion; and opposition to missions is held up as a justifiable cause for subjecting them to the rigours of a military despotism, backed by the exactions of a commercial monopoly. In this way are the ambition and avarice of this government disguised from the view of the world; the character of nations misrepresented; the truth of events distorted; and the people of the United States, who read little else but English books, duped and deceived into a misplaced admiration of British policy. This is a reading age, and it is from books that the majority of Europeans, and the descendants of Europeans, receive their impressions with regard to things that do not appeal directly to their senses. It is therefore an important object with every government to give, if possible, the tone to public opinion, by means of the influence of its literature. This government is perfectly aware of the truth of this position; and there is scarcely an event taking place in any portion of the globe, or a people inhabiting any accessible region, that does not, in a very considerable degree, receive its colouring and character from the direction given to the British interests and policy;

for the time being. I speak principally with a reference to our own country, which is always looking through the spectacles of English interest and prejudice : elsewhere the people, from not speaking the English language, and consequently not being in the habit of reading English books, are less subject to this system of deception, and more independent in their opinions.

I have just now seen, in one of the periodical journals, a notice of a work on the penitentiary system of the United States, from the pen of the ***** at ***** , which I have little doubt is intended for deep political purposes. This person is generally understood to be *****
 ***** , and the real object of his work is probably this : I think I mentioned to you in a former letter, that an attempt had been made to introduce a reform in the harsh criminal code of England, by substituting something similar to our penitentiary system, in place of hanging and transportation, for smaller crimes. The motion was carried against the ministers, and the subject will probably be resumed at the next meeting of parliament. The example and experience of the United States are considered as of great weight on this occasion, and Mr. ***** will do a most acceptable service to his patrons, by giving such statements with regard to the frequency and enormity of crimes in our "bundling and gouging" country, and most especially in Philadelphia, where the penitentiary system was first tried, and still subsists under the most perfect organization of any other, as will, if possible, prevent or embarrass its adoption in this country. For this purpose, he will no doubt avail himself of the reports of the societies, committees, &c. probably omitting to record the notorious fact, that a great proportion of crime in Philadelphia originates in that city

being unfortunately the place of refuge for runaway negroes of the south. With Mr. *****'s efforts to discourage the introduction of the penitentiary system here, I have nothing to do. All I can say is, that were it introduced, I believe almost half London would be in the penitentiaries in less than three months, and the whole kingdom would become a penitentiary before long, if people only lived as well as they used to do in ours. I demur, however, to his doing this at the expense of so respectable a city as Philadelphia, which has suffered for its humanity; and have given you this key to the matter, to make such use of it as you please. But it is impossible to enumerate the books published here every year to the prejudice of the United States. It is true, that none of them last more than a year; but like the dry leaves, when they fall, they are succeeded by a fresh growth—and as the public appetite becomes sated, it is quickened again by more preposterous absurdities, and more highly-seasoned romance.

The other day I went into the shop of a worthy bookseller, with whom I have formed some little acquaintance, by occasionally calling in, buying books, and gaining his confidence by paying for them punctually. He is one of those honest, old-fashioned tradesmen, who constitute almost all that is good remaining in this vast den of roguery and corruption. Grave, steady, and persevering, he seems content to grow rich by slow means, which are almost always honest ones; and, with all the courtesy of a tradesman, he never recommends a purchase, except by merely pointing it out to your notice. He would be mortified exceedingly were he to suppose for a moment, that you suspected him of entrapping you into buying a book, by merely handing it you to look at as a new or curious work. We often talk of America together;

and he is perfectly sensible of the superiority of our government, though he demurs altogether to that of our people. In speaking of this country, and I reverence him for the distinction, he always draws a marked line; he loves the island and the people, but is quite sensible of the abuses of their rulers. It is from him that I have derived most of my knowledge of the secrets of the trade, and the sources of that temporary renown which I treated of in some of my late letters. He has been nearly thirty years on this very spot, and his appearance, as well as that of his establishment, bespeaks easy competency. I have indulged in this short sketch, because it is a gratification to me to describe one of those Englishmen, to whom England owes a great portion of that character for probity she formerly enjoyed and deserved, and which she still enjoys in some degree by inheritance.

After some little talk with this representative of the ancient English trade, he turned my attention, with a good-natured kind of smile, to some half-bound books lying on the counter, which I found to be a new batch of travels in the United States. "They are," said he, "*as you may suppose, full of the old leaven, for no bookseller here dare publish, at his own risk, a favourable picture of your country, without a preface apologizing for the offence, and expressing his doubts of its truth.*" As I like to see the stupid blunders and misrepresentations of these people, who, in fact, do not know where we are most vulnerable, I bought the whole collection, and had them sent home to me.

One of the most ridiculous of these books, I found, was written by the very identical Mr. Howitt, who you sometime since informed me had ***** This sly fellow has revenged himself after the manner of the old story—"I'll not hurt thee," said the man to a dog that had offend-

ed him—"I'll not hurt thee, but I'll give thee a bad name." So he cried "mad dog!" as loud as he could, and raised a hue and cry against him. Thus it is with this sly man of peace, who, if he knew how, has evidently the inclination to set all mankind against us, tooth and nail. But you may judge of his whiffling warfare, when I tell you, the principal charges brought against us are smoking, spitting, and wearing straw hats, an offence heinous in the eyes of Mr. H. who, I hear, is a hatter by trade, and doubtless sees in the extension of this fashion, the utter and irretrievable downfall of his business.

This truly loyal traveller is almost as great an enemy to tobacco, as king James himself, and has blown another "counter-blast" against Virginia, that will make every recreant smoker tremble to the extreme end of his pipe. He maintains it to be a certain sign of vulgarity and ill manners. Sir Walter Raleigh was a gentleman and a scholar, too, and he smoked tobacco, which was probably one of the reasons for king James's persecution of that great man. Sir Isaac Newton too—he smoked tobacco when he went a courting, by the same token that we learn, he made use of his sweetheart's finger to press down the ashes of his pipe. But I can produce a still more orthodox example in the person of Bishop Fletcher, a courtier of queen Elizabeth, and celebrated as a "right comely and courtly prelate," who died of excessive smoking. How he escaped being rated among the martyrs, I know not. The bucks of the time, some of whom were very likely gentlemen, imitated Sir Walter, and there are a thousand allusions to the practice, in the old pictures of manners about the beginning of the seventeenth century. In one of these there is the following curious personification of tobacco :

"Enter tobacco, apparelled in a taffeta mantle,

his arms brown and naked, buskins made of the peeling of osiers ; his neck bare, hung with Indian leaves ; his face brown, painted with blue stripes ; in his nose swine's teeth ; on his head a painted wicker crown, with tobacco pipes set in it ; plumes of tobacco leaves ; led by two Indian boys with tapers in their hands, tobacco boxes and pipes lighted."

Phantastes, alias Mr. Howitt, exclaims at the entrance of Monsieur tobacco as aforesaid—"Foh—Foh—what a smell is here ! is this one of your delightful objects ?" Olfactus then addresses tobacco :

"Genius of swaggerers, professed enemy to physicians, sweet ointment for sour teeth, firm knot of good fellowship, adamant of company, swift wind to spread the wings of time, hated by none but those that know thee not, and of so great deserts, that whoso is acquainted with, can hardly forsake thee."

"Thou ministerest perfume
Unto the neighbour brain ; perfumes of force
To cleanse the head, and make the fancy bright ;
To refine wit, sharpen invention, and
Strengthen the memory—from whence it came,
That Old Devotion *incense* did ordain,
To make man's spirits apt for things divine."

Here now is undoubted authority for smoking tobacco, sufficient, I hope, to redeem it from the abomination of Mr. Howitt. For my part, I recommend it to him against his next book of Travels. If it "refines wit," "sharpens invention," and "strengthens memory"—good. No man wants wit more than Mr. H. ; and, according to the old saying, "certain people should have good memories."

I plead guilty, then, for my country, to the charge

of smoking tobacco, and the necessary result of the crime, to wit: spitting. But—not that I think it of any manner of consequence—it might have been as well for Mr. Howitt to state, that the practice of smoking tobacco is almost entirely excluded from the houses of well bred people; at least it was so when I left America, and I am assured is still more so now. In travelling in the steamboats, there was never, that I recollect, any thing like smoking, except on the forepart of the deck, or in a cabin exclusively set apart for those who chose to smoke. It is not customary to spit upon any man in America, except for his impertinence; and it is the worst species of falsehood, to make what is true, as respects the middling and lower orders, apply to those who are held people of good breeding or fashion.

The habit of smoking or chewing tobacco, is one of those recreations, or comforts, which are almost peculiar to the labouring classes and farmers, or to those who go to taverns and porter-houses, where the inveterate beer-drinking propensity of Englishmen so often carries them, and from whence they draw their pictures of *genteel* life in our country. It is one of the cheapest, the most innocent luxuries they enjoy. It does not interfere with their labour, and it occupies their leisure with an excitement, neither ruinous to health, nor destructive to morals. It is better than sleeping, like animals of the field; or resorting to drink and boxing matches, for passing away the time. It is also almost an invariable indication of comparative ease and leisure—it shows that the labourer can rest sometimes from his labours without starving, and that he can employ his vacant hours without injury to his morals or his fortune. I love to see, at least I *did* love to see, when in my own country, an honest tradesman, above all, an honest farmer, af-

ter finishing his work by sunset, sitting at his door smoking his pipe in peace, himself the image of contentment and competency. A fig for travellers' stories, broad-brim and all, say I! Smoke away, like honest fellows, my dear countrymen; it is not every where people possess the leisure, or *the peace of mind*, to enjoy themselves as you do. I hope the smoke of the pipe and the smoke of the chimney will be coeval; and when I see the labourer without his pipe at evening's close, I shall know that he is neither so happy, so domestic, nor so comfortable in his circumstances, as formerly.

Far, therefore, be it from me to deny the existence of the practice. I only wish to repel the assertion that it is general among polite people. The intention of thus confounding all ranks in this habit, is quite evident. It is to fasten another stain of inferiority upon us, by persuading mankind that the same class of people at home, are ten times more rude, vulgar, and unmannerly, than in England. One of the great objects of these Howitts is, to convince their countrymen, that the very nature of our government and institutions, is to make a rude and vulgar people; to destroy, in fact, all proper distinctions, not only of blood and rank, but of manners, morals, and refinement. If a tradesman among us, become rich, and his riches place him in a different circle—if his son enter the army, become a brave and accomplished officer, and be admitted into the best society—these very things, that actually constitute one of the beauties of our system, are so twisted, as to be made to appear the result of a total absence of all distinctions, moral and mental, whereas, they are directly the consequence of the exact opposite. It is, that mental and moral distinctions are almost the only ones that do prevail.

If it were worth while, I might give a thousand instances, occurring, not only in this country, but in monarchies far more despotic, of elevations still more sudden than any which ever took place in the United States, brought about by the mere favour of the king, purchased by corrupt sacrifices, or by money. Witness Catharine of Russia ; witness the mistresses of Charles the Second, George the First and his successors, raised to the highest rank, and whose blood now flows in the veins of almost one-half of the English nobility, who pride themselves upon exhibiting the badge of royal illegitimacy ; witness the sudden rise of ***** and ***** , whose merits and exploits are yet to be learned by the world ; and above all, witness the growing habit of the nobility, of selecting wives from the precincts of the *green-room*, not so much for their private virtues, as their public talents. In short, the caprices of the monarch, and the unrestrained passions of the nobility, every day bring about here, what in our country originates in superior worth, or greater talents and activity—in public services, or private virtues. Indeed, the extreme of despotism occasions in this respect the same phenomena, with regard to the elevation of men in ordinary stations of life, that are produced by the most perfect system of equality. The Grand Signor frequently makes his barber Grand Visier ; and Republics have often been governed by persons risen from similar situations. The difference is, the one originates in the sudden caprice of a tyrant, the other is the reward bestowed by the nation for long and glorious services. It is easy to please a single tyrant for a time ; but it is only a long course of good conduct that can secure the permanent affections of a whole people.

I am sometimes a little inclined to laugh at my sensitive countrymen, who, in their zeal to vindic-

cate their national character and institutions, not unfrequently most vehemently deny those very things of which they ought to be most proud. When a Howitt, or other self-important person, comes to the United States, and finds that in the stage, the steam-boats, or at the ordinaries, a man not half so well dressed as himself, will, without ceremony, address him as an equal—he is in a great passion, and writes us down a rude people in his book. When he undertakes to insult a poorish looking man, for coming into the common room of a tavern with his hat on, and is threatened with a beating for it, he forthwith falls into a great passion, and writes us down a very rude people indeed. But worst of all, when he attempts to bully a cartman or a porter, and getteth soundly beaten therefor; yea, verily, if he be a broad-brim, like unto friend Howitt, and it be against his conscience to fight, he will not strike us, but of a truth he will give us a bad name, and set us down in his book as the ~~indeed~~ ^{meanest} people in the world. Now, allowing a good one-half for amplification on the part of these travellers, the other half honourable to our countrymen, as indicative of that habitual consciousness of personal dignity which freedom always inspires, and the decay of which is the first indication of the approach, not of refinement, but of slavery—this rudeness, as it is called by English travellers, and of which they alone complain, because they alone are subjected to its effects by their offensive and arrogant pretensions, is, in plain English, nothing more than a disregard to fine clothes and fine airs, particularly when exhibited in stages, steam-boats, and inns, where all are considered equal. When the conceit of one of these English cockneys, which is always frothing at the bung-hole like a beer barrel, breaks out in the very faces of our good people,

they would be unworthy of the place they occupy in the state, if they did not repress it promptly and decisively. The cockney will set down this as rudeness and ill manners ; but, after all, it is only the spirit of a true man rising against pretension and puppyism. So far am I from disclaiming this in behalf of my countrymen, that I hope never to live to see the time, when a Yankee republican, in a homespun coat, or without any coat at all, would not resent an insult from a king (if he were not a dethroned one) quicker than from one of his inferiors. Independently of this general feeling of equality, there are others operating especially between Americans and Englishmen whenever they come together. They are two game cocks, running masters in two neighbouring barn yards, and seldom meet without certain feelings and recollections, arising from old scars, that render them particularly disinclined to misunderstand any thing that looks like an invitation to hostilities.

Touching the wicked and villanous practice of wearing light straw hats, instead of heavy felt ones, in hot weather, I have nothing to urge. If these unprincipled republicans will persist in it, after this solemn expression of dislike on the part of our traveller militant, so be it ; let the consequences be on their own heads ; I wash my hands of the sin, and solemnly protest against such unparalleled atrocities. It cannot be, but that some memorable calamity will fall upon them for such unbecoming practices, since it can hardly be hoped that Providence will suffer them to get off merely with Ephraim Howitt's disapprobation.

Is not this pitiful on the part of England ? Such a war is worthy of old women ; and such persevering malignity worthy of the — I will not say what gentleman I mean. What species of hostility so mean, as that of inciting ignorant, and needy,

and disappointed emigrants, on their return home, to write libels upon a country at peace with all the world? The motives are, if possible, worthy of the means—fear and hatred. “They hate us true men,” ‘because we would not be their colonists, and will not sit quietly down, with our arms folded, when they insult our feelings, invade our rights, and do all in their power to destroy our good name. They fear us because of our growing power, our capacity to enter into competition with them, precisely where they most valued themselves upon their superiority, and where their superiority was of the most vital importance. Then again thousands, I might almost say millions, of the poor of England are looking towards this country, still looking (notwithstanding the calumnies reiterated against us) to our country, as a place where they might be permitted to eat in comfort. It is partly to discourage the suffering tenantry and manufacturers from going thither, that these writers are encouraged in thus caricaturing the United States. I learn that this Mr. Howitt was sent out by some of the Society of Friends, who contemplated emigrating, to examine and make a report on the prospects presented to emigrants of their class. In ***** he fell, it is said, under the patronage of the ***** who, I understand, has lands in Canada. The object of Mr. Howitt’s misrepresentations is explained by the fact, that a large number of Friends have lately emigrated to Canada, under the conduct of a Mr. Shepherd. These repeated attempts to discourage emigration, by representing the state of society, the manners of the people, and the prospects held out to emigrants, in the worst possible light, have in some degree had their effect in imposing upon the ignorant. But this effect has been nothing, in comparison to that

arising from the exaggerated cries of national distress, yelled forth by the disappointed speculators of our country, and aided by the return of several English emigrants, who, it is pretty well understood, were shipped to America and brought back again at the charge of this government, on purpose to prove, that there was no longer a possibility of foreigners gaining employment in the United States.

Though not over-anxious on the subject, I wish they would adopt a better mode of preventing emigration than that of abusing other countries. That of making the people comfortable at home, by relieving them from the national debt and taxation, is, I think, much preferable. I am, on the whole, pleased to see the tide of emigration gradually flowing into our country. It is the highest compliment that can be paid to it, the most unequivocal testimony that can be offered to the excellence of our institutions, and the happiness of our people, when the strongest ties of nature and habit, the most rooted prejudices, and the bonds of early attachment, thus yield to their seductions. As a friend to human happiness, I am also glad to see foreign artists and labourers go to America, because I am satisfied they will be happier there. There is something pleasing, nay, interesting, to my mind, in this mutual interchange of protection and competency, for various improvements in the useful arts; for a thousand little facilities in procuring additional comforts or elegancies which these strangers bring with them. I cannot forget the poor Yorkshire lad, who, some years ago, before I became a wanderer, came to your door with half a dollar in his pocket; and who, while he taught your rogues a number of rural improvements, secured to himself, in no long time, the means of pur-

chasing a little farm, which, you tell me, he now enjoys.

Surely there is an honest gratification, not only to our pride, but to our better feelings, in contemplating this interchange of benefits between people born in different quarters of the globe, and thus brought together for the purposes of happiness, instead of in the field of battle, to struggle for life in the cause of unbridled ambition. It is mean, spiteful, nay cruel, to resort to calumny, for the purpose of checking the suffering population of England, in their pilgrimage to a country, where they would be allowed the enjoyment of the fruits of their labours. I say the enjoyment of the fruits of their labours, because there seems in reality but little difference, whether men be deprived of their property by the will of a tyrant, or by laws enacted by persons over whom they have not the least control. Taxation, to the extent of English taxation, is the very worst species of tyranny, since no man can escape its operation, except the fundholder, and even this *noli me tangere* is sometimes indirectly assailed, by exchanging his five per cents. for four per cents., or some operation of that kind.

However this may be, every body, in the least acquainted with the United States, feels and knows that they afford opportunities and advantages in the acquirement and preservation of property, to the labouring classes of every degree, far, very far, superior to this country. The United States are emphatically the poor man's home. How selfish, nay, how cruel is it, thus to deceive the suffering poor, the industrious farmers and mechanics of England, with incitements to go to Canada, and freeze; to the Cape of Good Hope, and burn; or to Botany Bay, to herd with the expatriated scum of Newgate, rather than to emigrate to the United States? The happy never run away

from home ; and it would be much better to make the English labourers comfortable in England, than to persuade them they cannot be so in America.

The success of this great system of calumniating the people of the United States, their government and institutions, is mortifying to behold, not only as it inflicts a wound upon my feelings of national pride, but as it is calculated to place still greater obstacles to the progress of freedom, by imputing to it these fictitious consequences. All classes here, with the exception of the very poor, and those who never read, are fully impressed with the most absurd and ridiculous prejudices ; nor is there any calumny, however enormous or improbable, that will not find a ready reception, even among those who have had demonstration to the contrary. No one of the patriots of the House of Commons, not even the most radical reformer, appeals to the example of our government, without trembling at his own temerity ; and no English writer dare attempt a vindication of our country, even from the most unfounded aspersions. Formerly, the federalists were in some degree of favour here, that is to say, so long as the government of this country cherished the preposterous expectation of their becoming subservient to its views. Finding themselves disappointed in this particular, the ministerial champions now confound the whole people in one mass, and are rather more bitter towards the federalists, whom they have the insolence to stigmatize as deserters from their cause !

It may be perhaps imagined, that this conspiracy of calumny originates in my own brain, and is the mere phantom of prejudice. Believe it not, my dear friend and brother. Be assured that two great objects now occupy the supporters of the thrones in this quarter of the world. Not foreign conquests, but the attainment of internal security.

Not the acquisition of new sceptres, but the preservation of the old. The eyes of their jealousy are turned inward, where they behold opinions and principles gradually developing and gaining strength, that, if not checked and extirpated in time, will destroy those systems under which they have, from generation to generation, been enabled to place the footstool of their power upon the necks of mankind. The United States of America, the first nation that ever declared these principles as the foundation of their system of government; the first that ever acted upon them; the first that ever demonstrated their effects, in the unparalleled happiness and prosperity which followed their practical operation, are necessarily the great example always quoted in support of these doctrines. "Opinion is the queen of the world," said *our* philosopher—and the queen must be conciliated by every art of kings and sycophants. The people who suffer under the impositions of old systems, no longer calculated to meet their interests or their opinions, are of course to be persuaded, that all they have heard of the happy results of our grand experiment of self-government, is false and exaggerated; that its results have been impiety, profligacy, and ignorance; and that its consummation will be irretrievable corruption of morals, and bloody excesses of anarchy, ending in the establishment of despotism. I believe I do not overrate the importance of our people preserving their free institutions, and the opinion of their superiority over every other political arrangement, when I affirm it as my solemn belief, that on their so doing, in a great degree depends the event of the approaching struggle between hypocrisy, ambition, and avarice, on one hand, and suffering humanity on the other, which seems gradually drawing to a crisis in this country, and in almost every part of

the continent of Europe. What objects, then, more important to the cunning hypocrites that conduct the secret purposes of this government, than to inculcate at home the most unfavourable opinions of every thing in the United States; and, on the other hand, to weaken the republican faith of our countrymen, by means of that literary ascendancy which has been so long maintained among them by the British press? Every effort *has* been made for these purposes; and in proportion as the influence of our example becomes more dangerous, these efforts will be increased, these arts multiplied.

So timid is now grown this expiring phantom of despotism, that it is beginning to be afraid even of American literature, and every effort is made to exclude all republican books, but such as are in a greater or less degree anti-republican. The bookseller here, who republished Mr. Breckenridge's account of the mission to South America, becoming lately insolvent, was actually refused a certificate of discharge, on the score of his "imprudence," in thus investing a part of his capital in an American book! Who, after this, will venture upon such slippery ground, unless the book be written for the London market?

LETTER XXXI.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

I SUPPOSE before this you have heard something of the magical effects of his majesty's visit to his loyal subjects of Ireland; a sort of scene got up with pretty much the same preparation as a theatrical spectacle. The object however was something more than mere amusement. The visit was undoubtedly intended for a great political purpose; that of taking advantage of those ordinary demonstrations of vulgar admiration, with which the populace, in a monarchical government, almost always greets the appearance of a great personage, to prove to the world that the Irish were the most happy and loyal of his majesty's subjects. For this purpose, the newspapers under ministerial influence were employed in publishing the most inflated accounts of the king's progress, and of the enthusiastic loyalty with which the people greeted him every where. Certain excellent writers of puffs were carried over from England, for the express purpose of furnishing accounts of his majesty's "grace," "condescension," &c. and the Courier every day had a column or two devoted to this object, under the head of "the king."

That you may form some idea of the extent to which loyal enthusiasm may be carried, in giving an account of the most common-place incidents, I have lately taken occasion to cut out of the newspapers here, such articles as happened to strike my attention, as characteristic of the spirit of that dignified species of government, monarchy, which it is fashionable to suppose exalts human nature, by giving exercise to its noblest feelings. I shall take them at random, as indeed there is no particular connexion among them.

On one occasion, we are told, "His majesty's reception of the catholic peers, was most gracious and flattering, and they withdrew deeply impressed with the dignity and affability of his majesty's deportment."

His leaving Christ Church is thus announced. "It would be impossible to describe the enthusiastic greetings which rent the air whenever his majesty's carriage appeared. *His majesty's carriage was escorted by the 7th Hussars.* Surely it must inspire the proudest, most ennobling feelings ever monarch experienced, to see he reigns in the hearts and affections of his people. His is not the dominion of *abject fear, or servile flattery*—it is the spontaneous offering of a people, grateful for his majesty's condescending visit." Here we see, my dear brother, that although his majesty's dominion was not that of "abject fear, or servile flattery," still he found it prudent to be surrounded by "the 7th regiment of hussars."

Again—"His majesty's demeanour at the levee was marked by great condescension and urbanity, and he received several deputations with addresses in the most courteous manner." At a review—"The king rode a white charger with a grave dignity, well known to you on the other side, but new and transporting to us."

Extract of another letter. "The manner in which his majesty received the address; the *attention* with which he listened to the recorder; the *dignity* with which he took the city sword from the Lord Mayor, and the *grace* with which he restored it, are the themes of *universal* praise and *gratulation*."

Next comes a specimen of his majesty's wit, which is affirmed to have warmed the generous hearts of the whole people of Ireland.—"On his majesty's landing, on Sunday, the first person he recognised was his dear friend the Earl of Kingston.—"Kingston, Kingston," said his majesty, "I am heartily rejoiced to see you, you good-natured, whiskered fellow, in this friendly country; how do you do?" I am sorry I cannot furnish you with Kingston's answer, which was not thought worthy of record.

The following has reference to the king's not having arrived the day he was expected, in consequence of which it was apprehended that the enthusiasm of the people, which had been wrought up to a proper pitch by donations of bread and beer, would evaporate.—"We shall not indulge in any elaborate description of the agitated state of public feeling during the whole of yesterday, in consequence of the non-arrival of Monday's mail. We shall merely observe, that the incertitude in which this circumstance left the whole Irish people, regarding the state of the Queen, and the period of the arrival of his majesty, our honoured sovereign, among us, whose visit it was feared might be abandoned altogether, produced a degree of *fever* in the public mind, surpassing any thing, we think, in the power of language to describe."

But the Muses of Ireland remained not silent on occasion of this astonishing event of a visit from

the king, as you may suppose. I shall not trouble you with many specimens of their loyal effusions, but content myself with one, which was particularly admired as by far the best of them all. It was sung on his majesty's entering the hall of Slane Castle.

"Welcome, welcome, mighty King!
Joy to Erin's isle you bring;
Prince, with thee the olive comes,
'Neath whose shade fair science blooms;
Erin, in her classic bower,
Wreathes for thee *her emerald flower*;
For thee, whom gentle peace attends,
Ten thousand welcomes Erin brings."

His majesty is recorded to have been particularly pleased with the idea of the "emerald," (that is) *green flower* thus offered by the poet, and graciously forbore to remark the total and unaccountable failure of the rhymer in the two last lines. The writer is said to be counsellor Philips, who is, at this present writing, reckoned the most loyal man in Ireland, except Mr. O'Connell, of whom anon.

"Mr. O'Connell said, he was certain there was not a heart in the country, that was not overflowing with gratitude to his majesty for his auspicious visit. Other monarchs can have palaces, but let us show the world that our most gracious sovereign shall have a palace erected *him from the overflowing and grateful hearts* of his faithful Irish subjects." This would be rather an odd palace, I should think.

Next to his majesty, Prince Esterhazy seems to have been the hero of this mighty farce, and after him my Lord Londonderry. Dress, however, appears to have been their forte, videlicet—

"Prince Esterhazy wore the most magnificent dress ever beheld; its riches and splendour mock description. The Lord Mayor's state also did high credit to the city. The dress of the Marquis of Londonderry attracted universal admiration by its extraordinary splendour."

Another account says—"A subscription is now going forward for erecting a testimonial to perpetuate the remembrance," (I beg pardon) "the glorious remembrance of his majesty's visit to Ireland. Let it be something worthy of the Irish nation—worthy of the splendid triumphs of his majesty's reign. Let this testimonial be the voluntary deed of the whole of the Irish people, and it will be the more acceptable to our most gracious sovereign. We hope the committee already established for the collection of funds, will act in a decided manner, and immediately publish a determination to erect a splendid palace, worthy of the greatest monarch of the greatest nation of the world."

Immediately after, as if in derision of the "splendid triumphs of his majesty's reign," we have the following notice of a second Serpentine-river business, which, however, did not take place. His majesty thought better of it. "His majesty, desirous of gratifying the public as much as possible, will issue his commands, we have heard, for a sham naval fight in the Bay of Dublin. After which he will land on the royal slip at Dunleary, and proceed to the city, not in regular procession, but amid the assemblage of his loyal people of all classes. Two fleets, of twelve or fifteen sail each, may be collected, and certainly no spectacle can equal in grandeur that of a naval battle. But to the islanders of this realm, it must awaken an association of ideas peculiarly gratifying, when we recollect that the United Kingdom is *the mistress*

of the waves. Our navy has long been our pride ; its thunder has reached every shore, *and its flag still rides triumphant on every sea," &c.*

I have reserved the best for the last, in order to cap the climax.—“ His majesty has, we understand, expressed the most unqualified satisfaction at the loyalty and affection manifested towards him in Ireland. They rendered to him the spontaneous and undisguised homage of their hearts ; and such an offering, from a high-minded and warmly constituted people, cannot prove otherwise than acceptable to a benevolent and generous monarch. It was that species of reverence which children are taught to feel towards parents, blended with the *awe* which subjects should entertain for their king. Long may this happy feeling exist ! long may the people of Ireland consider the king as their father. His reign will be prosperous and glorious, and will be the theme and admiration of the future historian. The love which his majesty has ever evinced, and the zeal which he has ever shown for this part of his empire, has been cherished in the memory of his Irish subjects. It has been long and deeply rooted in their hearts, no ungrateful soil, and only required the vivifying sun of his presence to produce the fruits we have just witnessed.” What bitter irony ! would you believe it, my dear brother, it takes twenty or thirty thousand English soldiers to keep this loyal and affectionate people from revenging the oppressions of centuries, and throwing off a yoke heavier than that of the ox, or the ass ?

But it is not alone in Ireland that these scenes have been *got up*, to impose upon the world an idea that these kingdoms are in reality the most happy and prosperous of any on earth ; and that those bitter complaints, and frantic outrages, which suffering only can produce, are the mere

language and conduct of a wicked and unprincipled faction. Take the following specimens of what the pulpit of England can produce, when prostituted to the purposes of blasphemous adulation. They are from a sermon preached at Leeds, by the Rev. Miles Jackson, the Sunday after the coronation.—

“How great,” exclaims the reverend gentleman, “the goodness of God, and how many the blessings of it, in giving to our king faithful ministers, and a heart to value, employ, and confide in them.”

Again—“God has laid all the burthen of majesty upon him, and we have all the benefit of the blessing.” “As God then has given him his heart’s desire, and not withholden the request of his lips, but presented him with the blessings of goodness, and set a crown of pure gold upon his head, I hope there are multitudes among us who rejoice in *his salvation*; that is, in the deliverance and protection which he affords them.” Here we have a direct comparison between George the Fourth and our Saviour!

Again—“Even with a bad king, and a persecutor, and a tyrant, *Christianity* requires this loyal attachment at our hands.” Here we have an assertion of the fashionable doctrine, newly revived, not only of the divine right of kings, but likewise of the obligation imposed upon us by our religion, to love and obey even “a persecutor and a tyrant.”

I will only trouble you with one more extract. “It is only,” says Mr. Jackson, “about eighteen months ago since thousands paraded our streets with the sound of martial music, with hoisted banners, with seditious inscriptions, and probably with implements of death. The king, knowing how groundless was the discontent, and how ruinous

the demands of the multitude, met their rage with firmness, and only *'uttered his voice, and the earth shouted!'* " Here we have the words, originally applied to the omnipotence of the Deity, prostituted to the purpose of describing the military tyranny of an earthly potentate. Yet Mr. Carlile, and Mrs. Carlile, and Miss Mary Ann Carlile, their man-servant, and maid-servant, printers, and printers' devils, have all been prosecuted for blasphemy; while it is rumoured, that Mr. Jackson will be promoted to a stall, at least! One instance more of loyalty, as carefully recorded in the ministerial journals.—When his majesty landed from the "royal squadron" at Margate, the stone on which he first placed his foot was taken up, and put in the lodge of the freemasons, there to be preserved as a memorial of this great event! When we read such language as that of Mr. Jackson, and hear of such instances as this of Margate, it almost persuades one, that the glorious days of intellectual darkness and moral degradation are fast coming upon mankind again.

But I feel it my duty to vindicate the people of Ireland and England from the studied and inflated adulation, with which the loyal newspapers have teemed on the occasion of the king's progress. These have, I doubt not, almost deprived them, not only of the sympathy, but the respect, of surrounding nations, who yesterday saw these people almost in open opposition to the king, and heard them complaining bitterly of the miseries of his rule; and to-day are told that they received him with a degree of servile adulation, of prostituted manhood, that would disgrace the slaves of an Asiatic despot. Be assured, my dear brother, that, in the first place, these shouts of the Dublin populace, and these loyal demonstrations of the freemasons of Margate, were not the voice and

the acts of the people of Ireland and England. In the second place, be assured, that these demonstrations have been exaggerated beyond all exaggeration. It was a prepared farce, as I hinted before, and got up with a degree of dexterity and management, characteristic of every act of this hypocritical, sleight-of-hand government.

Preparatory to the king's visit to Ireland, the people were taught to believe that he was coming with the most gracious intentions ; to inquire into their wrongs, to mitigate their sufferings, and, in short, to bring about the happy period of the golden age. Every day something was published and circulated, that was adapted to prepare the way for the favourable reception of the king and his companions. It was stated, that his majesty would spend fifty thousand sterling from his privy purse during his stay in Ireland ; and the effects of this liberality were set forth in a style as if it were to relieve the whole people from their miseries. The people were likewise given to understand, that Lord Londonderry had pledged himself to use his efforts for a repeal of the window tax ; and as the people of poor Ireland seem destined never to grow wise by experience, they believed his Lordship, in spite of the numerous lessons he has given them. The papers also set forth, that Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, a most important personage, secretary and **** to his majesty, was determined that not only himself, but all his family, should be clothed in Irish manufactures during their stay in Ireland. Various other little tubs were thrown out for the whale to play with. But the most effectual, was an understanding, that the king and my Lord Londonderry were determined on procuring a free toleration to the Catholics of Ireland. This in itself was sufficient to engage the leaders of the Catholics in every excess of loyal enthusi-

asm, and accordingly we find Mr. O'Connel, who not a year ago advised the Catholics to depend upon nothing but a reform in parliament, for a recognition of their claims, now looking exclusively to the favour of the king, and belying his conscience by calling him the "greatest monarch that ever reigned in England." Hence too we find Lord Fingal, and the other leaders of the Catholics, flocking around his Majesty, and displaying their loyalty by the most extravagant genuflections. In short, no theatrical monarch was ever ushered upon the mimic stage with more rolling of drums, and twanging of trumpets, than was king George into Ireland.

Thus prepared, his Majesty, being greatly inspired by the death of the queen, visited his beloved subjects of Ireland, and the first thing he did on his arrival was to drink whiskey, to prove that he had an Irish heart. This was attacking them upon the weak side, and when reinforced by certain excellent speeches, which had the uncommon merit of being short, won the warm feelings of this hospitable people, who would have hugged any stranger that thus paid homage to the national spirit, as well as the national taste. All the way from Dunleary to Dublin, the road was lined with people who were placed there by the Corporation of Dublin, and who, on condition of shouting and throwing up caps with a reasonable degree of loyal enthusiasm, were to be gallantly treated with bread and beer. If you could only conceive the wants of the lower classes in Ireland, you would understand perfectly, that such a temptation would almost obtain as warm a reception for Beelzebub himself, as his Majesty was greeted with. I am assured they did shout most vociferously, and that the more bread and beer they got, the more they shouted, as per contract. But this was the mere

dregs of the Dublin population; the lowest, most debased populace of the kingdom, following, not the dictates of their hearts, in paying a voluntary homage, but acting under the influence of their Corporation, and the temptation of a full meal. It was not the voice of the poor people of Ireland, whose voice, if it could have been heard at all, would have been heard in groans of misery, and shrieks of agonizing despair.

Every day, during the king's stay in Ireland, the populace was greeted with some new device, some grand review, or imposing spectacle, to entrap their admiration, and call their attention from themselves and their wants. At each of these his Majesty exhibited all his studied arts of popularity; drank his whiskey, professed his love for Ireland, and paid them off with bows and civil speeches. No wonder that these devoirs, aided by the powerful auxiliaries of amusement, bread and beer, should have kept the populace of Dublin and its vicinity from indulging in any demonstrations of ill humour. But the king never saw Ireland. His farthest excursion was to the Curragh of Kildare, a morning ride; and he never had an opportunity of gaining a knowledge, either of the real situation or feelings of this injured people. He returned, doubtless, inflated with vanity, and fully convinced, not only that he himself was the greatest of mortals, but that the people of Ireland were the most ardently attached to his person and government. Fatal errors! that, by leading kings into still greater excesses of profligate power, finally overturn their thrones, and make them exiles, or saints, like Charles the First and Second.

You will therefore be greatly mistaken, if you take these *hired* demonstrations of loyalty, exhibited by the lowest populace of Dublin and the neighbourhood, for specimens of the national feel-

ing. Still more will you be mistaken, if you suppose this visit, this "auspicious visit," as it is called, will be the herald of peace and prosperity to Ireland. It will only precipitate those excesses, which disappointed hopes lead a people into, when become impatient under long sufferings. What they might have borne, if these delusive hopes had not been held out to them, they will bear no longer under the bitterness of disappointment. What has this mighty visit achieved? Has it taken any thing from the odious burthens of the tithes? Has it mitigated the excessive severity of the revenue laws? Has it diffused the blessings of education? Has it raised the wages of labour, or given employment to the poor? Has it, in fact, done any one thing, but insult misery with exhibitions of wasteful extravagance, and deceive Ireland with promises never meant to be performed?

Even at this moment, when the print of the king's foot is yet on the sand beach of Ireland, religious dissensions are reviving, with only more virulence from their temporary cessation. The toast of "The glorious and immortal memory," which every Irishman understands as the signal of Catholic oppression, has been lately given at a public dinner in Dublin by the Lord Mayor himself; and it begins to be pretty well understood, that the Catholics have been deceived again for the hundredth time. Mr. O'Connell and the Catholic leaders ought to have known, before they prostituted their dignity to time-serving purposes, that they would not be paid the price of their degradation. They ought to have known, that the king cannot and dare not grant them a full and free toleration. The whole mass of the church of England will become disaffected if this should be done; and what is more, the Methodists, who hate the Catholics with even more than the bitterness of

the orthodox spirit, would oppose it with their countless numbers. Even the thousand denominations of dissenters would throw obstacles in its way, unless they themselves were included in the act of parliament. It is therefore among the many miracles of the Catholic faith, that they should still live in the expectation of a free toleration of their religion, from a body constituted like the present British parliament. As to the sincerity of the king and his ministers, I have some little doubt whether they would not like to conciliate Ireland, for the purpose of holding her up as a check upon the spirit of liberty in England.—“You have an army in Ireland,” said Lord Strafford to the deluded Charles, when he was about to tyrannize over his English subjects; “and the time may come, when it will be the last act of a king of Britain, to use his Irish subjects as instruments of oppression in England, as he has long used his English subjects as instruments of oppression in Ireland.” In every age, of the Christian world, it will be seen, that tyranny has ever found its surest means of oppression, in making use of one denomination of Christians to depress and enslave the others. By employing the power of the state, the means of deceit and the agency of corruption, kings are enabled, almost at pleasure, to elevate and depress any particular religion, and to make the persecuted persecutors in their turn. The old church of England is already almost in a minority, and the admission of three millions of Catholics would give a fearful addition to their rivals or opponents. The reflecting men of the established church consider, therefore, and with some reason, that the decision on the Catholic claims involves the supremacy of the church of England. The struggle appears to the world a struggle of conscientious scruples; but be assured,

the professed objects of religious disputes are not always exactly the real ones; and that power, wealth, and dominion over the minds of men, are very frequently the aims of ecclesiastics, as well as politicians.

But let us talk of the present. Even at this moment, the papers announce some of the happy effects of his Majesty's "auspicious visit." The deluded people, finding him gone without lessening their miseries, or lightening their burthens, have in many places broken out into excesses more daring, as well as more dangerous, than any hitherto committed. They have commenced the stopping of soldiers on the road, and taking away their arms by surprise, as well as that of searching the houses of the gentry for the like purpose. In this way they are furnishing themselves with guns, swords, and ammunition, which will make them more formidable than ever. The effects of long-continued suffering and oppression are becoming more and more apparent every day, in the headlong, impetuous, and uncalculating excesses, upon which hunger and despair precipitate mankind. The poor people, embittered by long-suffering and frequent disappointments of their just expectations, have become the scourge and the apprehension of the rich, who, in the first paroxysms of fear, send for the soldiery. These, armed with unlimited authority, commit excesses far greater than those they came to quell, and thus begins a bloody and remorseless contest, where the innocent and the guilty share an equal fate. The night, which, in happier countries, is the period of rest or relaxation, is in many parts of Ireland the season of burnings, robberies, and murders; sometimes the effect of desperate misery, excited and stimulated by oppression, and at others the cool inflictions of soldiers, who, conscious that they are sent to sub-

due or exterminate, that they are not the judges of guilt, but the executioners of the tyrant, court the applauses of the rich by stabbing and shooting the poor. In a country at peace with all the world, there is to be seen nothing so common as troops and regiments of soldiers, marching and countermarching, with drums beating and colours flying, not to conquest or glory, but to butcheries of unarmed peasantry, of all sexes and ages.— These are removed, at short periods, from one station to another, by the watchful policy of oppression, lest they should chance to catch the infection of pity, by living too long in the same little circle, and be thus induced to spare a single hair of their heads. I am assured by a gentleman lately from the neighbourhood of Limerick, that nothing can exceed the misery and turbulence of that part of Ireland. The people, he says, realize, and more than realize, the picture drawn of them a century ago by Swift, when, in the bitterness of his indignation, he satirized the oppressors of his country, and the hollow-hearted schemes of those who affected to relieve them, by his “modest proposal” for eating a certain portion of the children when they came to be a year old, particularly the children of the “Wild Irish,” who would naturally have the wild flavour of venison. “Some persons,” observes the dean, “of a desponding spirit, are in great concern about that vast number of poor people who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying and rotting, by cold, and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can reasonably be expected. And as to the young labourers, they

are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree, that if, at any time, they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come." Compare this picture with the following passages from some letters lately published, by Mr. Curwen, member from Cumberland, and a man of as high character as any in this country. Mr. C. has lately returned from a visit to Ireland, and writes as follows :

"We had frequently," he says, "in our view, and especially in the county of Limerick, a number of gentlemen's seats, many of which seemed to possess considerable domains, and to be ornamented with stately timber and extensive plantations. Opulence, in the vicinity of large commercial places, is ever conspicuous in the neatness and elegance which characterize the competence or wealth of the respective possessors, in the decoration of their country retirements, and costly relaxations from the labours of business; yet here, the cabins under their windows, instead of partaking in the general good, which fortune so liberally distributes, seem to suffer in an inverse ratio to her splendid dispensations. This opinion cannot be more accurately confirmed, than by stating, that in the examination of one of these wretched abodes, which was no poorer than its neighbours, we found its floor one foot below the surface of the road, from which it is entered by a door three feet high; the inside, from the bare ground to the top of the roof, four feet; the length of the side walls nine; the width six. This area, wholly destitute of all comforts, gave shelter to two rational beings, and was their only home, although scarcely fit for the

den of a wild beast. The plenty which surrounded this deplorable hut, and the sumptuous display of other men's habitations within its view, did but aggravate the melancholy feelings inspired by this scene of human misery, on every side of which the most luxuriant crops were ripening for general use, yet denied to those individuals whose labours had contributed to their production."

Again—"Unwilling," says Mr. C. "to quit the village without first satisfying myself whether, what I had seen was a solitary instance, or a sample of its general state; or whether the extremity of poverty I had just beheld, had arisen from peculiar improvidence and want of management in one wretched family, I went into an adjoining habitation. I had not the courage to explore farther, and became impatient to escape from the repetition of scenes, too wretched for human nature to endure, and too multiplied to be within my power to relieve."

Such is the picture of whole districts of country in Ireland. Yet these wretched people are called "deluded," when, in the bitterness of their sufferings, they make desperate war against the society which entails upon them and their posterity this misery and want! Insolent slander, and wretched subterfuge! They have been indeed long "deluded" with hopes of better times, but the delusion exists no longer, and the horrible energies of despair are now beginning their work. One cannot but despise the miserable cant and hypocrisy of the present ministers, who, while turning a deaf ear to the complaints of three millions of white men, women, and children, or answering them with whips and scorns, are attempting to deceive the world, by an affected sympathy for the wrongs of the blacks. While general Lambert, and his myrmidons, are busy in crushing the heaving bosoms

of Irish women and children, and stifling the last throes of hunger and despair in Ireland, sir George Collier is employed on the coast of Africa, to intercept the negroes, and restore them to their happy and legitimate governments; while in the discharge of this pious duty, he takes occasion to vilify the character of every nation, whom it is the interest of his government to calumniate. Can it be possible the world does not see, that this pretended humanity to the blacks, is assumed only to cover the oppressions of white men? Can our countrymen also be blind to another motive for this direction, attempted to be given to public sympathy? It is to place the white man and the negro upon an equality, and make the slavery of the latter, in our country, an offset against the oppressions of the former in England and in Europe.

Yet it is to such perishing wretches as Mr. Curwen describes, that the landlord, whom they never see, sends for exorbitant rents; the preacher, whom they never hear, for tithes; and the king, whom they only feel, for taxes! If, in the agonies of suffering, and under the combined pressure of insult and privations of every kind, they rise against the bailiff, the tithesman, or the taxgatherer, the ministerial papers call them "deluded wretches," and place that to the account of mere abstract opinions, which originates only in actual and unsufferable misery. It is in this way they endeavour to blind the world as to the true cause of the disaffection of Ireland; a disaffection arising out of causes that operate universally upon all mankind, and requires neither books nor emissaries to foment it. The throes of misery, which agitate that unhappy country, are ascribed to the effervescence of a turbulent impatience of rule or restraint; and the very consequences of that long system of misgovernment, under which they have

groaned, are placed to the account of innate barbarity, and incurable ignorance. A distressed and suffering people are said to be "deluded," when tracing, as they do, a large portion of their miseries to the impositions of the government, they resort to the only means left them to ward off the gripe of the tithesman and the taxgatherer.

I have been more particular in dilating on this subject, from a desire to vindicate the *Irish nation*; from any participation in the servile attentions lavished upon the king in his late visit to Ireland. Had the people of Ireland really and voluntarily shouted in the train, and licked the dust at the feet of the oppressor, they would have deserved to lose, and would have lost, the generous sympathy of our countrymen, and of all those who have hitherto commiserated their sufferings. They would have been held up as a nation, that neither injuries could rouse, nor insults sustain, against an innate and incurable servility, which, to use the words of one of the puffs I have quoted, "only wanted the vivifying sun of his majesty's presence, to produce the fruits we have just witnessed." Let me once more solemnly assure you, that Ireland did not stoop so low as to kiss the foot of George the Fourth; that she is not cajoled into submission to her wrongs, nor quieted into future hopes by the visit of his majesty; his drinking of whiskey; his ardent professions of attachment. She still continues to suffer; and every day strengthens the conviction that the consummation of things is near at hand, when the oppressors, or the oppressed, must cease to breathe the air of Ireland. The elements of society are fast dissolving there, and the people and the soldiery must struggle for the mastery. You are to understand, that the soldiery employed in Ireland are not Irish, but English, who feel little sympathy for their neighbours, being of

course imbued with all the loyal principles of antipathy, inculcated and cherished towards that unhappy country. It is a great support of a bad system of government, to have three separate kingdoms, cherishing certain feelings of jealousy towards each other, united under one sceptre. The people of one, can thus easily be made instruments in oppressing the others; and thus armies be brought to inflict the most enormous cruelties and oppressions, such as no temptation, one would suppose, could possibly induce them to practise upon their own countrymen.

There is a rumour here, that it is in contemplation to appoint the Marquis Wellesley to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland. Two reasons generally operate in producing this and similar changes in the provincial and colonial governments. In the first place it is perfectly well understood here, that these posts are given with no other view than to provide for some needy nobleman, or some needy dependant of a nobleman, who goes out with no other view, but to make a fortune out of the poor people in the shortest possible time. It is also understood, that as soon as they and their petty officers, secretaries, aid-de-camps, &c. have become completely saturated, they are to give place to another swarm, and so on, till there is no more substance left for the flies to prey upon. Such is the case with Ireland, India, Canada, Jamaica, in fact, every dependency of this country, which is of consequence enough to excite the longings of some cadet of nobility, or some cousin to a dealer in rotten boroughs. With respect to Ireland, there are other reasons operating to produce a frequent change of viceroys.

A good and benevolent viceroy, like earl Fitzwilliam, for instance, who has a heart to sympathize in the wrongs and degradations of that

wretched country, and a disposition to relieve them, at once becomes an object of jealousy to the few who govern Ireland, and revel in the patronage of church and state. To make a majority of the people of Ireland love him, is a sure mode of producing the recall of a lord lieutenant. But when, on the other hand, a miserable tool of bigotry and power combined has wrought the popular feeling into an agony of rage and despair—when the people, in the frenzy of suffering and degradation, goaded by hunger, and fired with oppression, can no longer be repressed or cajoled by the professions of their petty tyrant; then a different motive occasions a change. The professions of a new viceroy will be believed for a while, and the same deception can be played off upon the suffering people. They will believe in the virtues of their new governor, and in the promised benefits of his sway, until experience brings home again, for the hundredth time, the conviction, that a change of viceroys, secretaries, aids-de-camp, &c. &c. only brings with it a swarm of flies, more hungry and insatiable than the others. The Marquis Wellesley is poor and extravagant—he has spent the plunder of India, and that of Ireland, I suppose, will share the same fate. I must not omit to mention, that before the marquis of Hastings went to India, his paper was at twenty-five per cent. discount.—Alas, for poor India and poor Ireland!

It may strike you as an additional proof of Irish loyalty, and of the facts stated in the loyal papers respecting the universal enthusiasm with which the king was greeted by his Irish victims, that none of the opposition papers here have attempted a denial. To explain this, I must let you a little into royal metaphysics. You know the maxim, that the king can do no wrong. It is not an idle or inactive subtlety; it operates extensively; and not only hallows every act of the king himself;

but renders it little less than treason or blasphemy to question what is said by others to the honour, or profit, or pleasure, of majesty. Thus, to affirm that Lord Londonderry or Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, knight and ****, was not greeted with enthusiastic applause by the whole Irish people, is what any opposition paper may do with perfect safety. But to say the like of his majesty is a different affair altogether. It is disrespect ; it is disloyalty ; it is *scan. mag.* ; it is blasphemy ; and, with a little hard swearing of witnesses, a little loyalty on the part of a jury, and a little zeal on the part of the judge, it will go hard, but they will make it out rank treason. This ridiculous squeamishness, with regard to majesty, is an evidence of the servile principles incorporated with the system of government. It screens a king from ever hearing of his vices, and leads him into an error fatal to him or to his people, in believing himself the object of their love and respect, when they abhor and despise him. If he were to commit murder with his own hand, or, like Nero, set fire to his capital, nobody, not even the most outrageous republican editor, would dare to do any thing but—abuse the ministry ! You must therefore never expect to hear any thing from the patriots here in respect to the king's visit to Ireland, but that he was received by the whole nation with enthusiastic applauses, although he was never twenty miles into the country. The people of Ireland must, in addition to their other wrongs, be deprived of the sympathies of mankind by the universal belief, that they licked the dirt at the feet of the oppressor, and before his back was turned, rose into violence and outrage, without any additional provocations. The Courier and its echoes are determined to "swear truth out of Christendom," as Falstaff says, rather than not calumniate Ireland, and convert king George into a blessed darling.

LETTER XXXII.

*London.***DEAR BROTHER,**

You desired, in your last letter, that I would give you some more particular details with regard to the present state and future prospects of this country ; the relative happiness and prosperity of the people, compared with that of the principal nations of Europe ; with the best opinions I can collect, from my own observations and those of others, as to the final result of the great struggle between the people and the Holy Alliance, of which George the Fourth is purse-bearer ; or, in other words, between the advocates of human reason, and the supporters of human power, founded upon ignorance and superstition.

TAXATION IS THE CURSE OF THE AGE. To run up a great debt to support temporary interests, or to gratify temporary passions, and leave it as a legacy to posterity, is the great art and mystery of this government, and its humble imitators on the continent. The present debts of Europe, including England, amount to more than all the gold and silver that the four quarters of the globe ever produced, or probably ever will produce. There is scarcely one of these powers that is not over head and ears in debt, or that depends upon any other

means than borrowing for the payment of any extraordinary expenses. France, whose finances, by the way, are in a better state than those of any of its neighbours, owes about four times the amount of its yearly revenue; Austria six times the amount; Prussia four times the amount; Russia about twice the amount; Spain nineteen times the amount; Holland twenty times the amount; Great Britain eighteen times the amount; and the United States of America about five times the amount. A German statistical writer states, from official documents, that England pays annually, merely for the interest of her debt, one hundred and forty-five millions of rix-dollars banco; France thirty-three millions; Austria seven millions; Russia five millions; Prussia five millions; Holland five millions; and the remaining smaller states fifty millions, making an aggregate of about two hundred and fifty millions of rix-dollars per annum, merely for interest on borrowed money. Of this enormous sum, England, with a population of twenty millions, pays more than one-half.

Here is a noble budget of burthens for poor pack-horse posterity, which, having no reasonable prospect of redeeming the principal, must make up its account with either paying the amount of it some half a dozen times over in interest, or take occasion to get rid of the whole by dissolving the very elements of the political system, and organizing it anew. It might not be unworthy the attention of a philosopher, of whom there is such an abundance now-a-days, to inquire, how far a people is in reason and in conscience bound to pay either the principal or interest of a debt thus contracted by their predecessors from an impulse perhaps of passion, prejudice, or vainglory; to indulge a national antipathy, or to quiet an imaginary apprehension of danger. It may be urged,

that they are bound to take the evil with the good—the burthen with its accompanying blessings. But, if it be put upon this footing, why may not the people do what the heirs of an insolvent are allowed to do—refuse a bequest, and give up an inheritance clogged with incumbrances that render it a burthen? Why may not the posterity of the present race of English resign the blessings of princes and nobility revelling in wealth—a standing army rioting upon their treasure and their blood—taxes that follow them from the cradle to the grave, and in the grave—that load the light of the sun; the fire they burn; the air they breathe; and convert the common elements of nature into the pretexts for extortion? Why not give up all these invaluable bequests, and dissolve partnership with a society imposing these burthens, by emigrating to other countries, or by moulding the system into a form better suited to their happiness? It would appear to be neither just nor reasonable, in any point of view, to perpetuate a state of things so hopeless and so burthensome to the great portion of the people, for whose happiness governments were instituted, solely on the ground of a mere abstract notion of national credit.

But there is a new theory lately sprung up here, whether out of the fertile bog of Mr. Vansittart's understanding, or the expedient brain of Mr. Huskisson, I cannot say. It is like all other political and financial theories invented here, intended for the sole purpose of meeting present exigencies, and neither founded upon any rational calculation of past experience, nor future anticipations. It is like every art or policy of the government, merely intended for a temporary expedient to gull the people, until they can invent something again to

keep alive the spark of hope that lights to better times.

Formerly, they were actually persuaded, that the sinking fund would most assuredly pay off the national debt; that is to say, that borrowing a great deal every year, and paying off a little, would in good time work this modern miracle. But frequent disappointments in this rational expectation at length produced something like a doubt in the minds of the people, whether this mode of paying debts would prove effectual within any reasonable period of time, short of doomsday. The financiering logicians then lighted a new jack o' the lantern for the people to amuse themselves with chasing. They proved, by good sound calculations, that the national debt was a national blessing, and that therefore the more the merrier. John Bull chased this *ignis fatuus* till not long ago he fell into a quagmire, and came very near being smothered. Some mischievous radical persons then put it into his head, that the national debt was a principal cause of the great taxes he paid; whereupon he got out of humour with this same national blessing, and grumbled with great energy at these cunning financiers. Then came the master-piece of the combined ingenuity of Messrs. Vansittart and Huskisson; the last and the greatest experiment that was ever played upon the credulity of mankind. Mr. Vansittart had heard that the English had once believed that the moon was made of green cheese; that they had lately placed considerable faith in the miraculous conception of Joanna Southcote, and the integrity of Lord Londonderry. He therefore calculated that Mr. Bull would not stick at trifles.

Mr. Vansittart therefore, the other day, did, in the face of the world, fairly and openly assert, that taxation, to the extent it is at present carried in

this country, is not only a great national blessing, but that it is indispensable to the comfort and prosperity of the people. I heard him myself, or I would not believe a word of it. Mr. Huskisson followed, and enforced these sublime truths with all the powers of assertion, and all the arrogance of one who had long practised successfully upon the credulity of mankind. Nobody laughed, and at that I was not surprised, because every reflecting man must have hung his head in shame and sorrow, to hear such doctrines propounded in the parliament of England, once the champion of human reason, and the safeguard of human rights. But that such wretched expedients of a threadbare duplicity were not indignantly met, and exposed with the scorn they merited, is only another proof that the parliament of England has lost the feeling of independence, and the sense of shame. If it be true, that the present enormous system of taxation and expenditure is absolutely essential to the national prosperity, and that a reduction would only contribute still further to the distresses of the people, what a practical proof does it exhibit of the deplorable effects of this boasted system! If it be not true, what an unanswerable proof it affords, either that the ministry calculate upon a degree of stupidity in the people that is utterly inconceivable; or that they despise their intelligence, and rely on the corruption of the parliament, aided by the devotion of the army, in forcing submission where they cannot produce conviction. Surely he must be a sanguine disciple of ministerial orthodoxy, who can for a moment believe, that any serious intentions of reform can lurk behind the broad shield of such enormous absurdities. I had almost forgot to tell you, that in this famous speech Mr. Vansittart repeated the words "right honourable gentleman" one hundred and

eleven times, by which means he got through very well, considering all things.

In comparing the state of those nations whose debts I have just enumerated, it will be found that Great Britain, although the proportion of her debt to her income is not so great as that of Spain, or the kingdom of the Netherlands, is still subjected to far heavier burthens in fact. The yearly sum raised by taxes, excises, and imposts, amounts to more than quadruple that raised either in France, Russia, or Germany, each of which contains a larger portion of people than Great Britain, whose debts are greater than all the rest of the world together. Mr. Atwood, of Birmingham, has published some curious tables, compiled from official documents, from which it appears that "*the increase alone of the annual government expenditure,*" since the commencement of the late war, amounts to four times the annual rental of the whole kingdom! A large portion of this increase, more than one-half, certainly, goes to pay the interest of the national debt. Thus it appears perfectly clear, that the gains, and more than the real gains, of merchants, manufacturers, landholders, and labourers, are all swallowed up, merely in paying the interest of the national debt. It is worse than idle to reason on such facts; nor can all the cunning sophistry of economists weaken the force of that conviction which they must bring home to every reasoning being.

Nor is this the only point in which the situation of this unfortunate people appears worse than that of their neighbours, especially France, which is now reaping some of the fruits of the revolution, after having so long bled under its thorns. Notwithstanding the miserable efforts of the *ultras* to bring the nation back to its former feudal dependence and humiliation, there is one fact which is decisive of comparative national prosperity. In France, thanks to the

downfall of the system of noble and clerical monopoly, one-half of the whole population are *proprietors of the soil*. A second proof is, that she is rapidly paying off her national debt, without increasing the burthens of the people; and a third, if any more be wanting, is found in the fact, that France is every day becoming the refuge of the moderately rich people of England, as America is of the poor, who flock thither to escape the blessings of English liberty, and the ineffable Pitt system. The number of English who spend their incomes in France, is increasing every day; and it has been seriously contemplated here to tax them ten or twenty per cent. upon their incomes for the privilege, not of enjoying, but of escaping from the land of their birth. I cannot forbear mentioning here, that the inveterate jail-propensity of the English follows them into France, where it is now customary to call the common prison the *Hotel d'Angleterre*.

Nevertheless, a stranger, in merely passing through this country, and contemplating, as he passes, the splendid villas, castles, and palaces; the handsome cottages of the peasants; the beautiful division of the fields by hedges; and the rich verdure which every where springs up in the vapours of this isle, would conclude it one of the happiest on earth: and so it ought, and so it would be, were it not for the inexorable avidity of the government for the earnings of this once steady and industrious race. As it is, there is scarcely one of these cottages I speak of, that is not inhabited by discontented people, whose comforts are every day dwindling away under the visits of the tax-gatherer and the landlord's bailiff. Instead of living as they once lived in these handsome little habitations, I found their meals composed of the very poorest fare, and that not in plenty, but scarcely sufficient to satisfy the cravings of nature.

Every part of their possessions, even their rosy wives and children, are actually burthens to them, on account of the taxes, which, like the pestilence that walketh, not in darkness, but in full daylight, spares neither sex nor age. Things animate and inanimate, the ox and the ass, and the stranger that is within the gate, together with every public or private improvement, all pay, and all contribute to that enormous revenue, which is the aggregate of all that Englishmen can spare, without actual starvation. The card I send will enable you to comprehend the minuteness with which the prying financiers of this nation have penetrated every hole and corner of a house, where it was possible the occupant might hide a penny from the tax-gatherer. If you go into the most unpromising hut in New-England, and undoubtedly it is the same all over the United States, it is scarcely ever that you find the inhabitants without a plentiful meal of meat and vegetables; and though they may not be in general so neat and particular, in painting and embellishing their houses, or arranging their fields and gardens, still their mode of living combines far greater comfort than that of the English peasant of the present day. Your sentimentalists will perhaps say, that this same eating is a vulgar business, and that an hour of exquisite sentimental rapture over a novel of the "Great Unknown," outweighs all the pork, beef, and cabbage—ay, and potatoes too, in the universe. True; but this is the language of a full stomach. Even the most rapturous inamorato cannot live upon love more than twenty-four hours; and Don Quixote himself was forced to be hungry sometimes. When we come to the estimate of national happiness, the first question is, have the people enough to eat. Afterwards we may inquire if they possess the sciences and the arts—if they have fine churches, splendid

palaces, Lockes and Newtons, Shakspeares and Miltons, Catalanis and Brahams, fiddlers, dancers, players, mountebanks, nobility, and princes ; together with all those things which go to the composition of national glory. A beggar of Bagdad one day accosted a stranger, and besought him in the name of Allah, for wherewithal to purchase a meal, for he was starving. "How!" said the stranger—"is not your caliph the most beloved and splendid of all the successors of Mahomet—are not his women the most beautiful ; his ministers the most wise ; his armies the most valiant ; his poets the most inspired ; his metaphysicians the most profound ; his dancers the most elegant ; and his fool the greatest fool in the world ? Is not the city of Bagdad the richest, the most splendid, the gayest, the happiest, the most polite, elegant, moral, religious, refined, the most"—"All this is very true," cried the beggar, quite out of patience—"all this is very true, but in the name of Allah, I say again, give me food, for I am starving."

The duke of Northumberland has two hundred thousand sterling a year, and a million of oaks ready for cutting. I have seen his castle of Alnwick, and a noble place it is, calculated to awaken visions of ancient chivalry, and inspire admiration of modern magnificence. By the way, I have heard a good story of this Cræsus, which I will tell you while it is in my memory. He is not of the true stock of the Percy of ballad fame, but a slip of the Smithsons, who, I believe, are not much noted in chivalry. The duke of Douglas, who is of the old Douglas blood, paid him a visit at Alnwick not a great while ago, and was received by him of Northumberland at the gate, with "I am happy that a Percy and a Douglas at last meet peaceably before Alnwick Castle." Whether it was the allusion to the fate of the Douglas, to whom this

castle had been a sore place during the border wars, or the presumption of the Smithson, in equaling himself with the Percy, I cannot say, but duke Douglas immediately turned on his heel at this reception, and forthwith departed the castle, more discomfited than any of his ancestors had been before him. The story got abroad, and occasioned some merriment in the fashionable circles. The exploits of the modern Percy have been limited to our country, where earl Percy, I think, figures in the battle of the kegs almost equally with his ancestor in that of Chevy Chase. I believe, for this house of Northumberland seems consecrated to ballad poetry, it was this same hero who was fined for secreting some of his horses and livery servants, in order to defraud the king of his share of all the taxes and burthens appertaining to the possession of these articles. This affair was made the subject of a most humorous parody of a part of Chevy Chase in the Anti-Jacobin.

Be this as it may, the present duke is the richest man in Great Britain, and revels in all the enjoyments that wealth or rank can purchase. Not a thousand miles from his residence occurred, not long since, the following apt illustration of the blessings of inordinate wealth, and its certain concomitant, excessive poverty. A family was found under these circumstances: Two children were discovered in the house, locked up in a back room, where they had been eighteen or nineteen months, destitute of any clothing, except a piece of old flannel about their waists. Their hair had grown to a great length, and their appearance was squalid, wild, and wretched beyond description. They had been employed in making whiting all this time. The miserable parents alleged, in excuse for their apparent cruelty to their offspring, that

their own extreme poverty prevented them from clothing the children. They were removed to the poor-house. It is not my intention to blame this mighty duke, who was probably entirely ignorant and innocent of this whole affair. He subscribes, I believe, liberally to Bible and Missionary societies, and societies for the suppression of vice, and what is still better, has lately lowered his rents. He is therefore excusable in not particularly attending to mere trifles. But, in truth, the fault is in the system of government, which has produced the most miserable of all contrasts, a nobility revelling in luxuries, and a peasantry wanting bread. There cannot be a clearer proof of the misery of a country, than this monstrous inequality of wealth, which only arises and becomes permanent, by affording one class of people advantages and privileges which the others are denied. A people, beyond doubt, may be very poor, and yet as happy as in the ordinary situations of life, provided they have a cheap and simple government, are simple in their habits themselves, moderate in their wants, and are not placed in a situation to pine at their own poverty, by contrasting it with the wealth of others. But the lower orders are prone to imitate those above them as far as lies in their power; and I know of no example in history, of a people who remained virtuous and economical, while their princes and nobility were prodigal and corrupt. This inequality of wealth, then, when carried to an extreme, not only takes from the lower classes their natural and just share of the property of the community, and thus circumscribes them in the enjoyment of many comforts, but, by producing extravagance and prodigality in the higher orders, renders their privations the greater, by a direct and unavoidable comparison. The monopoly of the privileged or-

ders, takes first from the labouring class its just share of the good things of life, while their luxury afterwards corrupts the people, and thus renders their desires tenfold greater. By the just share of the labouring class, I mean that share of the national wealth, which industry and economy will always attain, when they are not prevented by a system of laws devised expressly for that purpose. A government of privileged orders is like a *Pharo Bank*. The chances, it is true, are but a little, a very little, in favour of the keeper; but then, in the long run, he will certainly win every body's money. The nobility and privileged orders, in like manner, have certain advantages in playing the game of life, which ensure them a large portion of its gains, such as superior wealth, dignity, and power.

It appears to me, that the alternative now before the people of this country is a confirmed despotism, or a complete revolution, similar in many respects to that of France. When the people are in such a state, as that the civil power cannot proceed in its ordinary operations without the agency of the military, the elements of social order are dissolved, the community reverts to its first principles, and force, not law or opinion, becomes the governing power. It is then that the contest is between the people and the soldiery; and as the one or the other obtains the ascendancy, military despotism or civil liberty follows. Such is the state of this country at present. England, Scotland, and Ireland, are garrisoned with soldiers, without whose interference, the magistrates, even aided by the *posse comitatus*, could not execute the laws. On every occasion of the least excitement, the turbulent and enraged spirit of hunger and distress concentrates itself in bodies of thousands and tens of thousands, who are called a mob,

but who are in reality the poor people of England. The military is every where close at hand, to quell the rising ferment, which, but for them, would eventuate in a revolution—and the result generally is, the death and mutilation of some of these suffering men, women, and children. In the affair of the Queen's funeral, something of this nature occurred; and, as if on purpose to irritate the people to madness, a subscription has been lately got up to reward the soldiers who shot at the *unarmed* citizens. If Providence, in decreeing the ruin of princes, first, as is said, deprives them of their senses, it would seem that the present race are not to last long. Sir Robert Baker, the Bow-street magistrate, and Sir Robert Wilson, have also been rudely dismissed from their posts, the one for sympathizing with the people on this occasion, and the other for remonstrating with the officer of the life-guards on the conduct of his men, in thus firing into an unarmed populace. Such things as these must necessarily add fuel to fires, that are only burning the more intensely deep for being kept under, not extinguished, by the military.

So long as the taxes can be paid, and the funding system continued, the people, I conceive, have little chance of relief. But if ever the government fall in arrears to the soldiery, or be obliged, from whatever cause, to diminish the army till it become no longer omnipresent in England and Ireland, I think it exceedingly probable that the army will join the people in the former case; and that in the latter it will be forced to a compromise for its own safety, and thus the inflexible justice of Providence receive another exemplification in the overturning of a corrupt system by the very instruments employed to perpetuate its duration.

The state of the public mind, in a great many places in this country, is sufficiently indicated by

the frequency of mobs and riots. These occur on almost every occasion that gives apology for a gathering of the populace ; and nothing can surpass their disposition to turbulence and excesses of almost every kind. The ministerial writers, the *Courier* and the *Quarterly Review*, ascribe this to what they are pleased to call "the innate and universal depravity of human nature," produced, as they affirm, by the horrible union of democracy and impiety, which are a sort of *Darby and Joan*, and always go hand in hand in the *Courier* and *Quarterly*. But this turbulent spirit of democracy, take my word for it, brother, is nothing more than the furious impatience of long suffering irritated to madness by the hopelessness of relief, and seizing every opportunity of venting its rage on those institutions to which it ascribes these miseries. People that are happy, seldom, if ever, violate the laws, or fly in the face of the magistracy. The more free they are, and the more general the diffusion of competency, the more orderly they will be found. Nothing can therefore be more false, ridiculously false, than the fashion of charging these excesses of a populace to the freedom they enjoy. Look at our own country, under its rational system of equality, its mild laws, and lenient police. Where there is one mob or riot in the United States, there are fifty, ay, a hundred, in the three kingdoms ; and where the aforesaid "turbulent spirit of democracy" produces one outrage against the civil authority in the former, oppression generates a hundred in the latter. The truth is, that all the excesses of the French revolution, as well as those which have lately occurred, and are every day occurring in England, Scotland, and Ireland, are nothing more than the natural and inevitable consequence of that ignorance and poverty which a long course of bad go-

vernment is sure to produce in every country. But, whatever may be its causes, this turbulent and impatient hostility to the appearance and the exercise of authority is a sure sign, either that the people are ill governed, or that a concurrence of causes, beyond the control of the government, has produced a state of public distress which always makes a nation discontented with its rulers.

So far from this latter being the case, I am satisfied that the present state of this country is almost entirely owing to its own policy of sacrificing the future to the present, as a spendthrift mortgages his next year's income to gratify his immediate passions. Whenever they wanted money, they borrowed it, and taxed the people to pay interest. This policy at length produced a habit of resorting to temporary expedients of legislation and finance, to meet the present exigency, which worried the people, rendered the profits of every business precarious, and made the value of property the sport of the government. At one time the mercantile interest swallowed up every other consideration, and it was then the fashion to legislate exclusively for the benefit of commerce. In time, however, this exclusive patronage of one portion of the community began to be felt by the other classes, who in turn demanded an equivalent for the disadvantages under which they laboured. Manufactures were then to be screwed up to something like a supposed equality. This was accordingly done; and the two interests of commerce and manufactures became unnaturally inflated at the expense of the third interest of agriculture, which bore the brunt of that reaction which will always be the consequence of an exclusive encouragement to one particular class of people. They are now trying to force agriculture up to the same point with commerce and manufactures; but, like

Archimedes, they want something to put the lever upon. For this purpose they are squinting a little towards the fundholders, an interest which, fostered by this propensity to borrowing and screwing up, has grown to outvote and outweigh either of the others. But this funding system is to be approached with infinite caution; to meddle with it, except indirectly, is to destroy the ideal basis on which the whole superstructure rests. In the mean time, they are talking of the impolicy of that system of bounty and restriction, which is interwoven with their vitals, and of the necessity of abandoning it, as if this could be done without convulsing the whole body politic, whose apparent inflated prosperity has grown out of this very excellent mode of ruining a good constitution by quack medicines, or artificial excitements.

So far as my observations have gone, I am forced to think, that a radical reform is the only relief to the peasantry of England. While this inconceivable debt of eight hundred millions is hanging over the people, and entailing a tax of near thirty millions sterling per annum, in addition to nearly as much more for the ordinary expenses of the government, nothing but such a concurrence of fortunate circumstances as cannot be anticipated, will, in my opinion, restore the nation to a healthy and vigorous internal state. The people, I think, begin to feel this, and to lose, in a great measure, their confidence in political economy, as well as the sinking fund. They begin to think, that this system of cockering one class of the community, and neglecting another, till it become so weak as to be beyond the reach of any stimulatives, is pretty much like a story I heard from an honest Kentish farmer, in illustration of this matter. An old woman had a pig, and a cabbage patch, with which she intended to fatten the

pig in the winter season. In order to bring this about, it very naturally occurred to her to pay particular attention to the cabbages. She weeded them, and hoed them, and watered them, and picked off the insects, until when the frosts came she had indeed a noble cabbage patch. But the pig! she quite forgot the pig, which, being entirely neglected in the mean time, had got so weak and sickly, that it died of indigestion in eating the first cabbage.

You may form some idea of the depression of agriculture, arising from the system of tithes and taxes, aided by that exclusive patronage of the other branches of national industry, which is always sure to react upon those not fostered by similar means, when I state, what I have learned directly from the farmers themselves. In the county of Norfolk, one of the most fruitful and best cultivated in England, they assured me that there was hardly a tenant, who, in the present state of prices, taxes, tithes, and poor rates, could afford to pay a shilling of rent. In Kent, Sussex, and in fact almost every shire in England, farmers, considered among the most wealthy of their class, are every day failing for thousands of pounds. The three classes of beggars, who live upon the sweat of the farmer's brow, the princes, the *****, and the paupers, have made him one of their honourable fraternity, and he is every day claiming what is now the most valuable privileges left to the British subject, that of being supported by the labours of others.

A radical reform, as it is called, is stigmatized by the gentlemen of the loaves and fishes, as a total *boulversement*, a subversion of the whole system of the government, and a new division of property. That this would be the result of a free representation of the people in parliament, I have

little reason to doubt. But I believe that imputing these intentions to the people, or their leaders, is a slander. The people, a vast portion of them, are either in want of their usual and ordinary comforts, or anticipate the speedy coming of the time when they shall want them. In looking about for the immediate cause of their privations, they perceive, that the frequent visits of the tax-gatherer have an inseparable connexion with the emptiness of their pockets. This conclusion baffles all the windings of political economy, by which this money, always I assure you, comes back (in Mr. Vansittart's speeches, &c.) to the very same pockets with interest. Having found the cause of this effect, or rather, as lord Polonius says, the cause of this "defect," our poor logician, guided by the lights of reason and experience, extends his vision, and sees that these taxes, which deduct so cruelly from the small portion of his comforts, originate in the vast expenses of the government; the vast sums spent by the king; the vast salaries and pensions of the ministers, their dependants and supporters; and the vast sums paid to the fundholders. These things he has learned without the agency of those mischievous tracts and newspapers, which the *Courier* and *Quarterly Review* so terribly dislike. The next step is to inquire, why these expenditures are not curtailed to suit the times and the state of the nation. Who vote the civil list, and the taxes? Parliament. Why does not the parliament refuse these vast appropriations? Because there are so many members, who, not being elected by the people, neither feel their distresses, nor take the only sure means to relieve them. It is thus that honest common sense will always find out where the shoe pinches, especially when honest common sense wears the shoe; and it is for this reason that the people have

no confidence in any permanent change for the better, except it be preceded by a reform in parliament, which shall restore the ancient balance between the people and the aristocracy. This will never take place; or, taking place, must necessarily produce one of two results. Either the parliament, thus constituted, will not answer the just expectations of the people, or, in so doing, will necessarily trench on those interests and privileges of the aristocracy, that these last will never probably resign without an appeal to force. Either way, therefore, I feel assured, that the only remedy for the sufferings of the people is an entire revolution. I never read of a peaceable reform of abuses, that had been engendering and growing to maturity for centuries.

What will be the consequence of such a struggle between the people and their rulers, it is not for me to say; but I am inclined to believe it will be very different from that of Charles and his parliament, or the revolution of 1688. I question whether, if the people of England obtain the ascendancy again, they will ever submit to an hereditary king. The example of our own happiness and prosperity shall yet, I trust, bring home to the conviction of our parent nation, the important truths, that pageantry is not solid grandeur, nor simplicity abject meanness. We shall yet teach them, by the example of our continued and increasing prosperity, that freedom is not anarchy, nor toleration of all religions an indifference to all; that a free press corrects its own excesses, and furnishes its own antidote, much more effectually than a college of censors, or an attorney-general; that the people may be fairly represented in a legislative body, without endangering the persons or property of the rich; that men may possibly be governed in peace and prosperity, with-

out being overwhelmed with taxes, and submit to the laws without fraud or coercion, without an established church or a standing army. This example must necessarily operate more forcibly upon the people of England, from their common origin, language, and habits, and, above all, from the intimate connexion of the two countries, the frequency and facility of communication produced by trade. It is for this reason, among others, that our country is perpetually misrepresented here, and the most senseless absurdities, as well as malignant falsehoods, palmed upon the people to prevent their being seduced, either to seek an asylum among us, or rise in their might, and cast from them for ever, the tattered pageantry of a worn-out system of government, at war equally with the happiness of mankind, and the spirit of the age.

Many obstacles undoubtedly lie in the way of the consummation of this salutary change in this country, most of which I have hinted at in my preceding letters. But I believe in time they will all be overcome. The English were, and still are, notwithstanding the pains taken by their government to debase and ruin them, a noble people, or rather the remains of a noble people. The present apparent calm, and the bursts of occasional loyalty you see in the loyal newspapers, furnish no ground to believe that things can possibly long remain as they are. The elements of dissolution are now at work amid a volcano of the mind, which may possibly in no very long time break out with irrepressible fury. The English are not a people easily changed, or lightly excited. It takes time to rouse them, and their vengeance is the production of passion and reflection combined. It is only the rich, and the privileged orders, with their dependants, that are really attached, by their fears and interests, to the present system. The

people feel, and must act, sooner or later. Like one of our lazy thunder storms, which is at first preceded by little showers, that rise, and threaten, and pass away, leaving a gleam of sunshine, and inducing the superficial observer to believe that all is over. By and by, the clouds slowly and imperceptibly gather along the whole western horizon into a heavy mass, which moves on in sullen silence, so leisurely, that it excites no apprehension until the sun is all at once obscured. But the nearer it comes, the faster it moves, until at length it issues in thunder, rain, and whirlwind, overwhelming the unwary people, that either did not see it, or thought it would never come, because it was so long in coming. It is often with our fears as it is with our hopes; just as we begin to despair of the one, and to despise the other, they are suddenly realized. I should almost weep to see this magnificent structure of ages demolished; but the fault is in those who would not take the preceding omens, and avert them in time. After all, however, I have no great opinion of that humanity which is solely excited by the misfortunes of the rich, or that will rave at a revolution which deprives a worthless king of his head, and a worthless nobility of those honours which they have not gained by their virtues, and those estates which might afford to millions of human beings like themselves, the means of comfort, and the blessings of education.

The people of France are every way better off than the English. The downfall of the monopoly of church and nobility, and the consequent distribution of the land among the nation at large, has diffused a general comfort and prosperity, to be found no where else but in our own happy country, which, I am glad to hear from you, only fancies herself a little miserable. Every thing is cheap

in that country; and this cheapness, which in England is complained of as the cause of national distress, is, in France, the source of national happiness, because the peasants own the land, and are neither burthened with rents nor taxes. In fact, such are the temptations held out to a resident in that country, that the emigrations of people of moderate fortune are becoming daily more and more an object of jealousy to the government of England. That great mastiff, the Quarterly Review, has accordingly been set upon France to bark and growl at her for holding out these seductions. The last number contains one of the most unprincipled attacks upon the character of France that I have ever seen. It takes for granted every thing that the national jealousy and rivalry of past times has produced among English writers, and then reasons upon these materials, as if they were facts established beyond the reach of denial or palliation. You may judge of the gross and brutal malignity of this article, when even its fellow-labourer, the Courier, affects to think it rather severe, though at the same time it acknowledges that the charges are certainly supported by the authority of history! This is what is called here "magnanimous candour." There must be something innately perverse and wicked in the taste of the English people, since the only two countries which really attract them are the United States and France, each, according to the foregoing oracles, equally destitute of morals, religion, taste, and refinement.

You may possibly be puzzled to account for the present agitated state of France, and the heat displayed in their debates, seeing the country is so happy. I will therefore endeavour to explain this seeming inconsistency. The two parties, called the *Ultras* and *Liberals*, are nothing more than the old distinctions which produced the revolution.

The former, of whom it has been aptly said that they have forgotten every thing they ought to have remembered, and remembered every thing they ought to have forgotten, are the old, tattered, pig-tailed remnants of imbecility, which have outlived the downfall of the ancient aristocracy. Without talents, without energy, and without seeming to remember the lesson which has been taught them, by the ruin of their cotemporaries, these puny, bed-ridden politicians, have commenced a desperate war with the spirit of the age. They aspire to bring back the happy days of monks, reliques, pilgrimages, legends, and miracles. They may be seen every day at the coffee-houses, declaiming most vehemently about atheism, infidelity, St. Louis, and Henry the Fourth, which last is the only monarch of his race they think it politic to recall to the remembrance of the nation. To hear them, you would think each one of these heroes was himself a Cæsar; to see them, you would be inevitably reminded of a half-starved tailor, a beggarly apothecary, or an exceedingly weazel-faced antiquary, who cherished about his person every exploded remnant of fashion: It is awful to see one of these walking mummies rap his snuff-box with terrible energy, take a most appalling pinch of real *ultra* snuff, and blow his nose with a gigantic energy, that would almost level the walls of another Jericho. Yet so entirely destitute of talents is this poor remnant of a worn-out aristocracy, that they have been obliged to ask the aid of some of Napoleon's *men*, to enable them to stagger a little while longer, under the burthen of a government they are every day endeavouring to pervert to the purposes of ancient despotism. They would like amazingly to cut off these people's heads; but at present they cannot do without, and therefore endure them.

The people of France would, I believe, be content with their present situation, had they any security for its continuance. But it is so evidently the design of the *Ultras*, which they make no secret of, in fact, to break down or overleap all the barriers of their security; to restore the ancient order of things; and to reclaim every benefit that has been conceded by them in the hour of peril, that the jealousy of the people is perpetually excited, and this excitement will, in all probability, one day produce a revolution, which will place things on a basis to endure for ages. It will not be a bloody revolution, unless the holy alliance interfere; for such is the deplorable weakness and imbecility of the *Ultras*, that a breath will unmake, as a breath has made them.

The means, by which these wiseacres are attempting to sustain their crazy edifice of power, are worthy of the men, and of the cause they espouse. They began by setting on Monsieur C***** to employ all his eloquence in favour of the ancient trumpery of the monarchy. Superstition, and chivalry, St. Louis, miracles, pilgrimages, crusades, and what not, were brought forward in splendid array, as things highly suitable to the genius of the age, and essential to the preservation of what little reason, faith, and virtue was yet left among the deluded people. Monsieur C***** was directed to hold up the ancient monks of Palestine, who deserted the duties which society requires of every man, to caves and deserts, to wear holes in the rocks with their pious knees, to beg of holy pilgrims for their support, to gain the veneration of mankind, under pretence of despising all worldly things, and to make themselves only the more known, by retiring from the world. He was to hold up these as examples, to which all the active exertions of virtue,

for the benefit of the human race, were as nothing. Monsieur C***** was moreover directed to put all the tinsel and gold-leaf of his expansive rhetoric in requisition, to place before the eyes of the people, the fleshless, bloodless, and almost boneless skeleton of ancient superstition, clothed in all the splendid figures of his tapestried imagination. Monsieur C***** was furthermore instructed, to recommend the revival of that excellent faith, which holds no fellowship with works, by all the allurements of his genius, and to enforce it by all the authority of his example. He therefore, became a devotee in language, and a profligate in actions. He took not unto himself a wife, but a ***** , and by means of some other peccadilloes, managed to become the very mirror of modern legitimate ultra saints. When he dies, he will certainly be foremost in the new calendar.

Monsieur C***** , though the atlas of the ultras, is not, however, altogether depended upon to bring about the consummation of this great union of ignorance and superstition. There was a certain M. *Benjamin Constant*, and some other mischievous fellows, men of good morals, and therefore no friends to the legitimate ultra doctrines. These were a terrible stumbling-block in the way of Monsieur C***** , and his associates, being equally eloquent, much more logical, and having the popular side of the question. A censorship of the press was therefore to be set up, with strict injunctions not to let any of these mischievous books or essays of M. Benjamin Constant, and others, be published, without first expunging every argument which Monsieur C***** , and others, would not answer. To make all sure, in addition to this, a *board of literature* is now getting up, whose province it will be to superintend schools and colleges; to pre-

scribe, not only what classical and scientific books shall be used in the system of education, but what novels, plays, and books of amusement shall be permitted to the scholars. Every tragedy that inculcates a single sentiment of generous liberty, or places the abuses of power before the imagination; every novel or comedy that satirizes the weakness or the vices of the churchmen and nobility; every thing, in short, from which can be drawn one solitary ray of intellectual light, that may pierce the anticipated darkness in which it is sought again to envelope the civilized world, is to be prohibited to the rising generation. In place of these, the legends of profligate saints, the bulls of popes, the chronicles of monks, and Monsieur C*****'s new glosses of old superstitions, are to form the intellectual banquet of the youth of France. It will not be long, most probably, before his present majesty, the misguided Louis, will be carried down to the seacoast, to direct that the waves of the ocean shall cease to roll; that some modern Joshua will bid the sun, not only to stand still, but go backwards to the happy days, when kings could trample on that miserable worm, man, without his daring to turn. You will laugh, no doubt, but I assure you it is true, that the long waists, stiff bodices, &c. which, you tell me, are making inroads upon the pretty little short waists and spencers, are auxiliaries to this notable plan to bring about the ancient order of things. It is thought, that if they can only get the people to dress as they did under the ancient regime, they will naturally think and feel as they did in those days. That beautiful costume, modelled from the finest specimens of ancient taste, and which was the product of the revolution, is therefore to be discarded. Is it possible that mind, the perfection of which constitutes divinity itself, can

thus be put back like the hands of a clock, and be made to retrograde at the will of kings?

Can it be wondered at, that the people of France, that the good La Fayette, who has studied the features of liberty in our great school, should see through this clumsy and insulting plot, and seeing, use every mode of reason and argument to defeat it? It cannot escape their observation, that this war against the human mind is preparatory to a complete re-organization of the constitution of France, which will in the end, if it be successful, restore the ancient order of things; take from the people their dear-bought privileges; and deprive them of the lands they have long considered as their own, because they fairly purchased them. It is vain to attempt to persuade them, that these measures are merely measures of precaution against the excesses of religious and political freedom. The people are aware of their inevitable tendency, and to succeed in them, they must first be deprived of their understanding. They must be brutified before they will again wear the yoke. Such is the present state of things in France. The offensive measures of the ultras are called measures of precaution; while the precautionary measures of the liberals are stigmatized as attacks upon the prerogative.

Italy was once the mistress of the world; but the mistress has become the handmaid, and seems destined to serve those she once ruled. The arts flourish there, and men decay, as in Goldsmith's time. Napoleon would have made something better of them had he lived to carry his plans into execution. He made them work instead of beg; and, though a severe and inflexible master, was just the master Italy wanted. But his active rule has been succeeded by the stern, phlegmatic despotism of Austria, and the Italians now wear a

lead collar about their necks. Idleness and beggary are encouraged from motives of policy, since a nation of beggars is but another name for a nation of slaves. Among the better sort, there are a number of scholars and patriots, who declaim about liberty like old Romans, and submit to be enslaved like modern ones. To hear them talk, you would think they would emulate the Swiss; and throw themselves upon the German bayonets; but the whiskers of a pandour will cool this hot patriotism in a moment. They go to hear one of Alfieri's tragedies, and glow with the warmest sentiments of liberty. They hear the next moment a favourite overture from the orchestra, and melt in musical ecstasies; they see a female dancer whirling about, until her petticoats, if so they may be called, are any where but where they ought to be, and mount to the very pinnacle of sensual inspiration. Alfieri, liberty, patriotism, and every noble subject is forgotten in this succession of voluptuous, of enervating excitement. Thus they vibrate from sentiment to sense, and from sense to sentiment. Yet they are a people of fine genius. It is only among them that the fine arts can be said to be really at home. In England they have been reared in hot-beds; but they were out of their element; and but for our countrymen, West, Alston, and Leslie, the higher branches of painting would, for the last fifty years, have been almost entirely extinct. Indeed, nearly all the great painters who flourished in this country were foreigners. So with their musicians; and as to sculptors, they have never produced a second or third rate. In France they have done better; but still they have never approached the arts of Italy. In Germany, music indeed was carried to the highest pitch of excellence by Pleyel, Haydn, and Mozart. How it happened that these

phlegmatic smokers became so, I cannot tell, but all Germany is musical; and even among the common people it was formerly customary, and perhaps still is, to meet with persons critically skilled in this charming science. I used to think at first that it was owing to the sprightly Rhenish wines; but far from the Rhine, and out of the reach of Rhenish inspiration, I have observed a similar taste and skill among the peasantry. But this is a mere peculiarity. In the other fine arts they have never approached the perfection of Italy.

Italy has also produced the best tragic poet, and the best historian of the age. Alfieri is, beyond doubt, a first-rate genius; and Mr. Hallam can bear witness to the judgment, research, and eloquence of Sismondi. I could wish these writers were naturalized in our country; for if we are to depend on foreign literature, it will serve to deliver us from the exclusive dominion of English opinions, could we be occasionally furnished with translations from German, French, and Italian works of merit. Italy, with all her corruptions, follies, and crimes, is still a literary nation; and many of her late writers exhibit a manliness and freedom of political opinion, that indicates something like the resurrection of her ancient glories.

The great obstacle to this is superstition. So long as they believe in the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, and fear to take the pope's bulls by the horns, there is very little hope of their freedom. I certainly have a high respect for the Catholic religion, and consider it, with a few exceptions, preferable to almost any other: but it is not, I imagine, very eminently calculated to subserve the interests of freedom. The profound obedience paid to the will of a pope, is, I should think, paving the way to an equally abject temporal submission, by instilling into the mind habits

of impressive reverence for the will of a mere man. Another reason for my opinion is, its spirit of intolerance, which I cannot but regret, and which, at the very moment that the people of Spain and South America are struggling for freedom of action and opinion, inexorably decrees that the Catholic religion shall alone be tolerated as the religion of the state. Nothing can be clearer than that this is striking at the very root of civil liberty, since the usual and ordinary penalties for nonconformity to the established church are civil disqualifications. The civil rights of individuals can therefore never be safe, nor a people really free, where they can only sustain an equality with others by the profession of a particular faith.

The other day, the pope was induced to fulminate a bull of excommunication against the Carbonari, which actually frightened these valiant champions of freedom out of the little wits left them since the famous battle with the Austrians, where there were three men actually wounded, and several thousands missing. It is stated, that a vast many of them have surrendered, or abjured their Carbonari catechism; and, although it is highly probable the effects of the bull have been exaggerated, still there is no doubt but it caused great confusion among these enlightened champions of Christendom. Now it is quite evident, that a people who can be put down by an ecclesiastical fulmination, coming from one who is himself a party to the coalition against them, have no chance whatever of gaining their freedom, until the greatest miracle of the Catholic church shall appear in the person of a pontiff, who is an enemy to temporal and spiritual tyranny. The Italians are pretty much in this state of abject superstition; I mean the lower orders, who are usually

those who most feel, and oftenest resist the impositions of a bad government. Among the higher orders, and especially the literary class, there is, I think, or at least there was, within a few years past, a great deal of profession, with very little actual reverence, for the pretensions of the church. They went to mass and confession, but I suspect they did not confess this fault at least. One day or other, I sometimes imagine, the whole system of Austrian ascendancy in Italy will undergo a complete revolution. Italy will then be perhaps independent, but I doubt whether she will ever realize our pure representative system of government. The people will still be much better off, and much more respectable than now : but she will probably not be again what she once was. I have never seen a man who was twice young ; neither have I often read of a nation having once reached, and declined from, the pinnacle of glory, that attained it again. Greece and Italy have had their day. We may sigh over their degradation ; and in the remembrance of what they once were, fondly and illusively anticipate what they once will be again. But all history proves, that the progress of nations, of white men at least, is uniform in all ages, and every where. They emerge from obscure barbarism to a point beyond which they never pass, and which they can never reach again, except by once more becoming barbarous, and commencing *de novo*. Italy, if any nation, affords a solitary exception to this great rule. She has had her two great epochs of glory. She conquered the ancient world by her arms, and the modern by her arts. Like the immortal spirit, she seemed to part from this world to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, only to emerge again in a more bright and ethereal form of captivating beauty. Italy has therefore lived twice ; she has

bad more than her share of the world's admiration—more than her share of power and glory; and to me it appears highly probable, that ages of darkness and ignorance will elapse, before she will emerge a third time from the clouds that seem gradually gathering around her; not like those which envelope the tops of her volcanos, threatening uproar and desolation, earthquakes and eruptions—but presaging a long calm of darkness and despotism. Like her own Herculaneum, she seems destined to be buried and forgotten for some two thousand years.

The people of Prussia and the German States were promised a representative system, as a reward for their great exertions in opposing the armies of Napoleon: but the danger is past, and the people have no representative system. When they talk of such matters, the princes point to their armies, or threaten them with a visit from the holy alliance. They have among them many bold writers, who talk "big," as our Indians say, until they are threatened with a visit from the hussars, when they are very apt to be as quiet as lambs, or change sides. They tell of secret tribunals and masonic societies, for overturning these governments; but these, I believe, are mere bugbears, to frighten the good folks into a quiet endurance of bad, for fear of worse. There is, however, a strong spirit of freedom at work, one way or other, among the people; and there is not a prince in all Germany, that would not, if he could, like another Omar, burn all the books in his dominions, and consign his subjects to perpetual ignorance. They are quite as much afraid of a book as of a bayonet. The Jesuits have been recalled to educate the German youth in the true principles of obedience, and all private tuition is strictly prohibited. There is

no time to be lost, for the next generation are to be educated for slaves.

The peasantry of Germany are in a state of slavery considerably worse than our negroes. They suffer all the degradations, without the corresponding advantage of being maintained by their masters. The nobles still exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction in their castles, and their vassals are pretty much at their mercy. They are subjected to the support of nearly all the public burthens, from which the privileged orders are exempt. In some places they are prohibited the use of tobacco; in others they are forbidden to drink coffee; and nothing can equal the tyrannical, as well as apparently capricious privations they are subjected to in these little adjoining rival states, whose princes have no commercial rules or financial schemes, save those which most enrich themselves at the expense of their subjects. An eternal feud, some years ago, arose between two valiant little neighbouring princes, on the following momentous occasion: An Italian snuff-maker had settled in one of their territories, and carried on a great trade. The prince had his eye upon him, and, at a proper time, laid an enormous duty upon the exportation of snuff. The Italian immediately removed his establishment a mile or two, which brought him into a neighbouring rival state, where he manufactured snuff, free of duty, under the very nose of his old persecutor. The thing, however, has caused a vast number of broken heads; for the peasants, whose sole pride consists in the dignity of their respective masters, hardly ever meet without discussing the affair of the snuff-maker with their fists. This is one among a thousand samples of the narrow, interested policy, of these German States, whose rulers seem to have but two objects—

that of spiting their neighbours, and oppressing their own subjects.

I think I mentioned to you a visit, some years ago, to the castle of Prince Esterhazy, near Presburg, one of the most magnificent places in Europe. None of the royal palaces of this country can compare with it. The owner of this grand palace figured, the other day, in his majesty's Irish tour, as the Prince of Diamonds, and whose vast revenue of half a million sterling has been so trumpeted in the newspapers. Nothing could equal the cumbrous magnificence of the establishment; the vast variety of the gardens; the pavilions, the pictures, and statues. There was, in fact, I thought, a little too much of every thing. What rendered the whole particularly striking, however, was the miserable aspect of the surrounding country. There was, within a short distance, a large morass, full in sight of the castle, and called the Lake of something, (I forget what,) by way of courtesy. This lake had overflowed, and laid a considerable portion of the surrounding land under water. Around it were to be seen a parcel of walking shadows, shaking with the ague, and exhibiting poverty and sickness combined. Their habitations were thatched with straw, and every part of their establishments afforded an instructive example of the blessings of centering the whole wealth of a province in a single person. Within about half a day's journey of this princely palace, its gardens, pictures, statues, and pavilions lined with gold, you enter into a country inhabited by a people, with regard to the comforts and refinements of life, pretty much on a par with the Hottentots and Esquimaux. I remember perfectly well, even at this distance of time, encountering one of the skeletons of the lake, or morass, on my return from contemplating this grand castle of Prince

Esterhazy, and having some talk with him in my smattering of German. Though shivering with the ague, and miserably clothed, he asked me, in the pride of his heart, if I had ever seen such a fine place, and whether I did not think *his* prince the greatest prince in the world. His own privations and sufferings seemed forgotten in the contemplation of this magnificence. There are two stages of the human mind, in one of which the poor man, like this peasant, derives a happiness from contemplating the wealth and splendour of his master; the other, where they only render his inferiority more galling. It is always the interest of the princes and nobles to keep them in the former state. This man asked me if I had seen the prince's theatre, where the performance was entirely carried on by puppets, which played better than some of their real actors—which I thought quite possible. The prince maintained it at an expense of, I forget how many rix-dollars a year. The keepers or directors, when they grew rich, went off with their money to their native place. For the price of this puppet-show, the prince might have drained the morass, and at the same time employed his dependants in a useful labour, conducive to their present comfort and future health. But he preferred his puppet-show—a practical illustration of the blessings of luxury to the people!

The princes of Germany, with the enlightened emperor at their head, are bending all their energies at present to the noble task of brutalizing mankind anew. For this purpose, a barbarous warfare is carrying on against every species of literature, which is not devoted to the support of ancient abuses, and the revival of ancient superstitions. Authors, who speak as the genius of the age requires they should speak, and who dare to reason on the right of the people to demand the fulfilment

of the promises of their kings, are fined and imprisoned. Colleges, where such a mode of education is pursued as comports with the present state of science, arts, and philosophy, are subject to arbitrary visitations, and rules devised by oppression for perpetuating ignorance and slavery. The sons of the peasants are no longer permitted the dangerous acquisition of reading; and a poor man who can write, is an object of jealousy and distrust to a prince, who has learned, from the experience of the present age, that the only security for the maintenance of these abuses, which originated in the ignorance of the people, is to bring them back to the same state. That you may form some notion of the pretensions of these princes to govern mankind, I must tell you that the emperor Francis is particularly distinguished for his skill in making *sealing wax*. There was, some years ago, a story current in the diplomatic circles, that when the treaty with Napoleon Bonaparte, which annihilated his power in Italy, was brought to him, he was observed to ponder upon it, and examine the seal for some time, as if almost afraid to investigate the contents. At last he was heard to exclaim to himself—"Um—it is not better than I can make"—meaning the *wax* of the seal! You see what freaks fortune commits. This emperor would have been a useful person, if he had followed the bent of his genius for making sealing wax, instead of being brought up to govern thirty-five millions of people. In the mean time, the common people in Germany, who used to look to our country as a refuge, are, in some measure, deterred, by the misrepresentations which are continually appearing in English publications, which are translated and circulated all over Europe. They begin to believe that there is neither law nor gospel among us. We cannot help it. We offer them liberty, and the means of

happiness; if they will not accept of them, let them hug their chains, and welcome. The Germans are a fine people, and, what is more, most emphatically, an honest, upright people. It is true they drink, and smoke, when they can get tobacco. But what of that? Drinking and smoking are not so bad as canting and hypocrisy, after all. The people of Germany, in short, ask of their princes a fulfilment of those promises, which, operating upon them in the hour of peril, enabled these princes to preserve their thrones, and to put back the torrent which would have swept them from the eyes of mankind. The princes, forgetful of their honour, as well as their true dignity, having endeavoured to evade, as long as possible, a compliance with the just wishes of the people, at length fairly avowed their determination to resist by their power, what they cannot oppose either by facts or reasonings. It is hardly a political question, since it turns entirely upon the moral obligation of fulfilling a promise, or rather complying with one part of a contract, when the other part has been faithfully performed. The princes promised their people a representative government, by which was meant, giving them a voice in the state, provided they would embody themselves for the safety of their rulers. They did so, and shame on the rulers who shrink from the performance of their promises!

Of Russia and the northern nations I know no more than you. I never was so far north, and can tell nothing but mere hearsay. All the world knows that the emperor is the head, and the heart too, of the holy alliance, and that he has given Dr. M***** a diamond ring. Those who believe, that to repress the efforts of the people of Europe for ameliorating their present situation, is to encourage liberty, or that giving a ring to the doctor,

is patronising science, may believe the emperor Alexander a friend to liberty and learning—and then they may believe any thing else.

The government of Russia is, however, so far as I can learn, rather an oligarchical, than an imperial despotism. The nobles have continually interfered with the succession of the empire, and placed their creature or favourite on the throne. So long as they selected from the blood royal, it seems to have been considered sufficient. The nobles are likewise the proprietors of the soil, and of the two-legged beasts of burthen that cultivate it. You may form an idea of the nature of their privileges, by the following extract from the code of Catharine the Second, conferring merely additional immunities upon the nobility.

First. All commanders of regiments, &c. are directed, on every occasion, to give the preference to nobles, over those who are not noble, in all military promotions.

Secondly. The sons of nobility are directed to be received into the military academies for instruction, in preference to all others.

Thirdly. The right of buying and selling lands is exclusively reserved to the nobility.

Fourthly. The nobility are to enjoy the exclusive privilege of the distillation and sale of all kinds of spiritous liquors.

The nobility thus possess the lands, the people who cultivate them, and the fruits of their industry. You can imagine what is left to those who are not noble.

The emperor Alexander, who knows the value of a good name to a monarch of the nineteenth century, has, it is said, attempted to bring about the emancipation of the peasantry; but has been thwarted by the opposition of the nobles. I don't know whether the emperor was serious, but at all

events, I imagine he was pretty certain he could not succeed. The Russian peasant may, however, recover his liberty in three principal ways. By the bequest of dying persons—by purchase—and by entering into the navy or army. From the moment they are enrolled in either of these, they become emancipated from their servitude, not only while in service, but ever afterwards. This single fact is sufficient to make Russia the greatest military power on earth, since the regulation gives her advantages in recruiting armies, possessed by no other cotemporary nation. I imagine the emperor Alexander is now the only monarch in Europe who has nothing to fear from his subjects, and who can consequently employ the whole military force of his empire in foreign conquests, without endangering his power at home. The politicians of the south of Europe begin to see the impossibility of opposing his plans, and seem content with the humble privilege of now and then being permitted to snap up a bone, which he occasionally throws them, to stop their impotent snarling. I beg pardon for this liberty, of the *Peace Society*, and the *Bible Society*, of which the peaceable and pious emperor is a member, and especially of Doctor *****, to whom, I earnestly hope, he will, ere long, present the order of St. Alexander Neuskie, the fattest and most sleepy saint in the whole calendar.

The situation of Spain is unquestionably, at present, the most interesting of any European nation. Having shed torrents of blood in behalf of a paltry king, who is beyond doubt playing the hypocrite, like all the rest, and who would to-morrow call in the holy alliance of bayonets, if he were not afraid of falling an instant sacrifice to the indignation of his people, the Spaniards found themselves in a peculiar situation. The nation had been promised

relief from many of the galling abuses which by degrees had crept into the state, all the effect of which, as is usual with abuses of this nature, finally were shifted from the privileged orders to the people. While it suited king Ferdinand to comply, or effect a compliance with their stipulations, it was very well. But becoming, at length, emboldened by the promised support of the holy alliance, as originally stipulated, and forgetting, in his prosperity, the lessons of his misfortunes, the cloven foot began to peep forth. Without entering into particulars that must be known to you, it soon became obvious that either resistance to these first approaches must be made, or that slowly and surely the people would be deprived of every blessing, for which they had stood in the face, and finally baffled the greatest power that ever existed in the world. The English, as usual, take all the credit—but the Spaniards paved the way for the downfall of Napoleon, and the others followed in their path.

It is among the thousand arts of the supporters and advocates of despotism, to endeavour to persuade the world, that these efforts of mankind, are the result of a corrupt and unprincipled spirit of anarchy in the nations of Europe. They labour, and too often labour with success, to establish the opinion, that this opposition to their kings, is of an offensive rather than a defensive character; and that their demands are for new concessions, after old ones have been complied with. The refusal to fulfil those solemn stipulations, which were in fact the price of the people's efforts, and without which, these unprincipled despots would have been wandering on the face of the earth, is studiously kept out of view. The efforts, sly and insidious, and therefore the more dangerous, quietly to resume these concessions where they happen to

have been made, are equally veiled from the eyes of the surrounding nations. The conspiracy of kings, under the blasphemous title of the Holy Alliance, whose objects have been lately proclaimed to the world, is itself a sufficient incitement for every nation of Europe, to make efforts to attain to that degree of freedom for which they are ripe, before this trinity of abominations has buried the spirit of the age under a mass of ignorance and superstition. Yet are all these considerations lost sight of in clamour and declamation; in malignant denunciations of the whole people of Europe; in hypocritical lamentations over their corruptions and vices, that make it dangerous to treat them like men, and to justify their being treated like brutes. If these charges of universal corruption be true, I would inquire how they became so; whether this is not the result of a long series of oppression, that has stript human nature of the marks which God himself bestowed, in token of its superiority, and given it the characteristics of an inferior race? What right have these despots to complain, if, after making men brutal, they sometimes behave like brutes; or that, when they throw off their chains, like captives long confined in dungeons, and emerge to the light of day, they are prone to commit imprudent excesses? What rulers make of men, they will find them at last; and they have no right to complain of the reaction of a long series of despotism, which first brutifies men, and then makes them mad.

In this state of abasement was a large portion of the people of Europe when the French revolution broke out. The sudden conquests which succeeded, were not more owing to the enthusiasm of the French armies, than to the coldness and disaffection of the surrounding nations, who had no attachment to governments, of which they felt only

the weight and abuses. That they committed excesses occasionally, is true. But all the excesses of liberty combined, are nothing to the curses which despotism has showered upon mankind. The difference, however, is, that the excesses of liberty are fatal only to a few of the great; the excesses of tyranny fall on the whole people, whose sufferings can neither be the subject of a tragedy, nor a novel. They can only be described in vague and general terms. The consequence is, that the execution of Charles the First, and the death of Louis, excite more commiseration than the ruin of nations, and the sufferings of millions of mere common-place people. But when we talk reasonably on such matters, it is quite certain that though the common people, the mass of nations, will not make very excellent heroes of plays and novels, yet is their safety and prosperity one of the prime ends of the institutions of civil society; and when these institutions no longer answer those ends, it is not reason, nor yet is it religion or humanity, to oppose their efforts to re-organize them anew, for the purposes for which they were originally designed. It is only the interested minions of power that have dared to maintain the contrary. No writer of any reputation, either ancient or modern, has ever denied that there are abuses of government, which not only justify, but make resistance a duty. What these are, can never be defined. Who then are to judge? Those who feel—the people.

When the patience of the people is exhausted by a long series of oppression, and they at length resort to force to relieve themselves, it is no sufficient argument against the justice of their cause, that they do not proceed with the discretion of sages, or the temper of philosophers. Opposed, as they always are, by the privileged orders, who

wield the whole resources of the state, they are obliged to resort to force, in order to obtain the means of successful resistance. Where power is arrayed in opposition to them, and the laws make no provision for righting their wrongs, they have a claim of which no perpetuity of abuses, nor any long sanctified opinions, can ever divest them. In this situation are the people of Spain; and the efforts made by the London Courier, as well as other ministerial organs, to instigate the king of Spain to acts that will occasion the most terrible commotions, and thus give a pretext for the interposition of the holy alliance, cannot be misunderstood; as little doubt can there be with respect to the object of those exaggerated accounts which daily appear in that paper, concerning the occasional disturbances in Spain. It is hoped in this way to conjure up the spectre of another French revolution, and thus enlist the fears of all Europe against a nation which formed the bulwark of the thrones of that quarter of the globe. In truth, the British government presses are now the most unblushing advocates of despotism in every part of the earth. Not content with calumniating our nation and government, they wage war against every people who are engaged in the sacred cause of liberty. It is sufficient for them that a nation is struggling against tyranny, to lavish the most unbounded abuse upon its character and motives. The struggles against oppression are denominated an impatience of lawful authority. When the poor Greeks attempt to resist the galling chains of the Turks, themselves and their illustrious ancestors, who gave to the world its patterns of taste, its examples of virtue and wisdom, are made the scoff of these miserable hirelings. The unfortunate Irish, who yesterday were represented as in a tempest of loyalty, are to-day stigmatized as

"deluded wretches," because they prefer resisting the payment of tithes and taxes to starvation and misery. It is but the other day that the Courier, whose editor rides in his own fine coach, furiously assailed, not only the modern, but the ancient Greeks, because they admired Aristophanes! The whole secret is, that this disciple of despotism is in a furious passion, because the modern Greeks are discontented with the mild and legitimate government of the Grand Seigneur! It is true, that the English ministry, and, of course, the editor of the Courier, are great nominal enemies to African slavery. It is also true, that *white christian slaves* are sold every year by thousands in the markets of Constantinople, and that the Turks not only spit upon, and call them dogs, but may, if they like, put them to death at pleasure. Yet, notwithstanding the unconquerable desire of this same ministry to abolish the trade in black slaves, they have not only never interfered to prevent this trade in white slaves, but they are at this moment attempting to justify their oppression of the Greeks, and their murders of christian bishops and patriarchs, seemingly with no other motive than a determined hostility to any thing that looks like freedom, except among the negroes. It is a bright star in the crown of glory which this country once wore, that she is secretly leagued with a Mussulman dealer in white slaves, an enemy and a persecutor of the faith of which she affects to be the champion. It is by such inconsistencies as these, that governments, as well as individuals, betray their hypocrisy, and that their real motives become apparent to every observer.

Such appears to me to be the present state of things in this country and Europe. The object of the holy alliance is to perpetuate those abuses which, like fungi, always abound in corruption.

and rottenness—that of the people to destroy them. The means employed by the former are force, fraud, and hypocrisy: under colour of supporting order, they are tightening the chains of mankind, and making religion a pretext for destroying their liberties. They pretend to be the sole judges of what is necessary for the happiness of the people; and when fraud and hypocrisy fail in producing a temporary submission, they enforce it with the last resource of tyranny, bayonets and broadswords. The law, too, is perverted to purposes of oppression, and what was originally devised for the security of the people, wrested to the purposes of supporting a tyrant.

But the most dangerous warfare which this holy brotherhood is waging against mankind, is that directed to the purpose of arresting the progress of human reason. If this succeed, tyranny will be permanently established on the ruins of learning and literature. If we take the language of the present orthodox writers here, the disclosures of the government papers, and above all, the declarations of the holy alliance of despots, the present troubles of the world, that is to say, the troubles of kings, and the rest of the monopolizers of heaven's blessings, originate entirely in mischievous books. The plain English of which is, that the people have learned to estimate their own importance, and to know those rights which are necessary to the security of that happiness which naturally falls to their share in the general distributions of Providence, and of which nothing but a bad government can effectually deprive them. This is one effect of the progress of human reason. Another consequence is, that knowing these rights, they perceive that they are justified in the eyes of God and man in asserting them, even at the risk of destroying the monopoly of the privileged orders.

Among a happy people, these are, it is true, mere speculative opinions ; but when hunger pinches, and oppression grinds, they become motives of action, and their action is tremendous.

If these plans for restoring Europe again to the sleep of ancient ignorance are not arrested in good time, their effects will be fatal to literature, arts, sciences, and every thing connected with them. Ignorance will be orthodoxy, and knowledge delusion. The one will be rewarded, the other persecuted. The time will then soon come when priests alone will be the interpreters of all knowledge, human and divine ; when a Galileo will be obliged to abjure his discoveries in science, or be burnt at the stake, and the benefit of clergy be a rare and valuable privilege. This is not idle dreaming, or visionary speculation. Let us trace the steps by which natural effects result inevitably from natural causes.

Knowledge, beyond what is essential to the means of existence, is sought with two objects. The first is the pleasure derived from the acquisition of power, for knowledge is power—the second, the distinction, rewards, and honours, which it is calculated to confer on the possessor. These motives prompt us to invent and perfect sciences ; to enlarge the sphere of human knowledge ; to widen the range of human reason ; to penetrate into the deepest recesses of philosophy, and essay the most lofty flights of the imagination. For these we anticipate the respect and admiration of our fellow-creatures, the notice and rewards of the state, and the still more noble meed of posthumous fame. But if every exertion of the human mind, except what is directed to the support of antiquated tyranny is repressed and discouraged by the certainty of neglect, or the apprehension of punishment, is it not a natural consequence that

these exertions should be discontinued, or, if not, directed to the very purpose of perpetuating the ignorance of mankind. Is it probable, that when the poet is denied to range over the field of imagination without restraint, unshackled by censorship, and fines, and imprisonment, if he indulge in any flight into the prohibited regions, that he will cultivate his art with enthusiasm, or attain to the highest species of excellence? Is it possible that a philosopher will dare to disclose those secrets which unfetter the mind, and set it free from error and superstition, when the stake and the faggot, the dungeon and the jail, will be his reward? or is it to be believed, that the historian will ever tell the truth, when the truth will cause the labours of his life to be committed to the flames, and jeopardize his existence or liberty? It is impossible to tell what may be obnoxious to the tyrant, or what may be considered blasphemy by the church; of consequence, no man will dare to write in opposition to the patrons of ignorance and superstition, who see nothing in the progress of human knowledge but danger to the tyrants.

The ignorance of the people is a natural consequence of the obstacles placed in the way of a free exercise of mind in those who are qualified to become their teachers. Nothing will come to them but what is expressly calculated to make them more ignorant: our mutilated productions, disjointed and lame, which the scissors of the censor have deprived of all connexion of thought, and converted into a senseless jargon, calculated to bring disgrace upon the cause they espouse. You would understand this better could you see a French newspaper, which is full of stars ***, and abounds in the hiatus; resembling the chasms of an old ballad, or one of Lord Byron's fragments of poetry.

Without going farther into detail, I think you will perceive that the direct tendency of these measures of the holy alliance in England and Europe, is to carry mankind back into the ages of ignorance. It is folly to say that they cannot succeed; because the human mind never goes backwards. It has gone backwards in almost every nation of the old world, once at least, and may again. The same abuses and tyranny, which, if not resisted in time, will inevitably produce barbarism, and did produce it in the vast Roman empire, are sufficient, if not promptly resisted, to produce it again and again, whenever they have an undisturbed operation. In my poor opinion, therefore, whether these plots against the human intellect succeed or not, will entirely depend upon the resistance made by the people of the present generations. The next will begin to feel the effects of the system of retrogradation, and the next after will believe in the divine right of kings, as well as the infallibility of priests. A bad government may do any thing with a submissive people. It may make them brutes in every thing, even to walking on all fours.

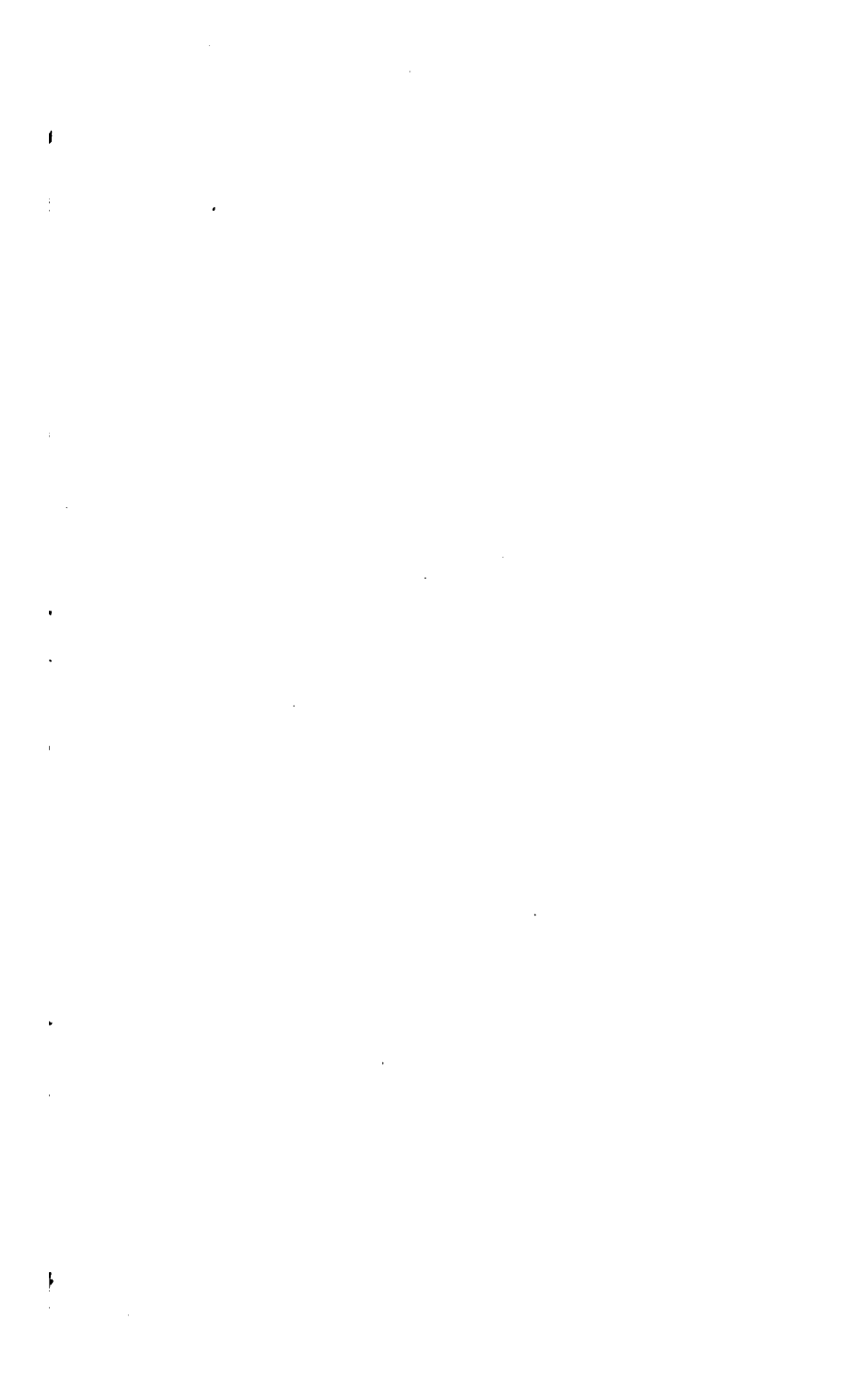
Whether the people of Europe will resist effectually this conspiracy of kings against the dignity of mind, is another question. When I see the arts, the power, and the resources of those who are attempting this nefarious miracle, and behold how, one after another, they are plunging the nations into hopeless slavery; how they bribe the very intellect of man to commit a suicide against itself, and to bear false witness against its neighbours throughout the earth; in short, when I contemplate the combination of interests, feelings, and prejudices, brought to bear in support of their project, the close union of the oppressors, and the disjointed and miserable opposition of the oppressed, I sometimes des-

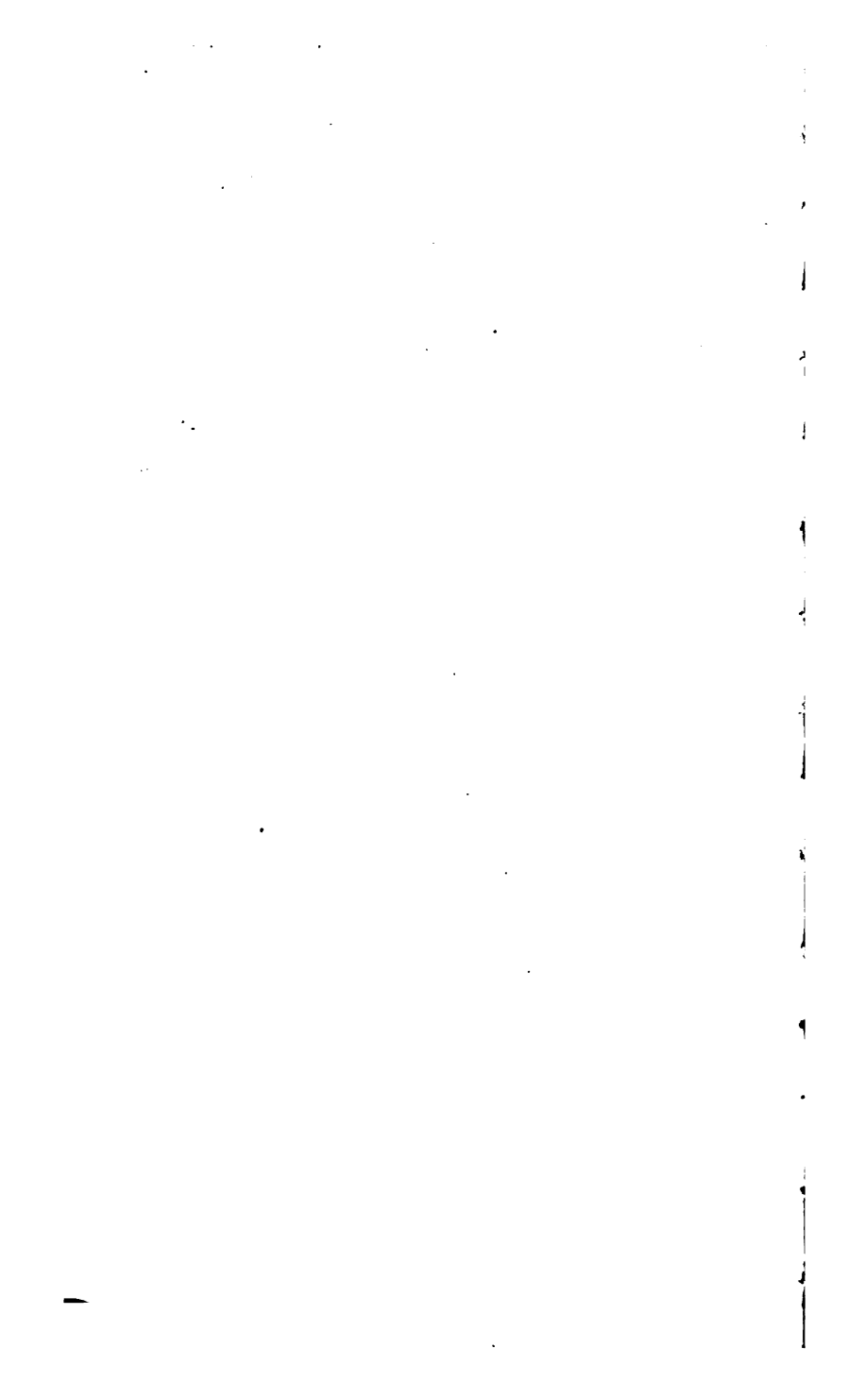
pair of any effectual resistance. It seems almost impossible to escape the snares that are laid to entrap the unwary, or to resist the force employed in defeating the schemes of those who feel their degradation. I am almost afraid that the republics of the new world are destined to stand alone, for ages to come, as objects of hope to the people of Europe—of fear to their kings. Tyranny has struck her root so deep in the soil of the old world, that to pull it up, tears the very bowels of the earth asunder, and unfixes the centre. I am satisfied the event of the struggle will turn upon the progress of mind : if it continue to expand under the pressure of these tyrannical restraints, and to advance against the rolling wave of power, all will go well ; but if, on the contrary, it shrink, and shrivel, and retrograde in the trial, the people of Europe will become abject slaves, and deserve to be so for ever.

In the mean while, my brother, for the twentieth time, I again tell you, the more I see of the world, the more I love and cherish our country and its institutions. Every where else, I see the many a prey to the few, and the necessary comforts of millions sacrificed to the idle luxuries and paltry pageantry of one. Every where else, except in France, I see the peasant more abjectly a slave than one of our negroes—a slave with the face and the heart of a white man—a slave without the benefits of slavery. Every where else I behold nations, whose remonstrances, instead of being like ours, the signal for reform, are the heralds of new impositions, and deeper degradation. The more they complain, the worse they are treated, under pretence of their complaining without cause. The extremity of their sufferings brings with it the exclusion of all hope of relief, since they behold a military force employed to execute old laws, wrested

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